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ABSTRACT

Dedicated to Seth Kreisberg, this document is the first journal issue of the Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). It begins with "The Real Ropes Course: The Development of Social Consciousness" (Shelley Berman). The other articles are presented in five sections. The first section, "Our Relationship to Society," contains: (1) "What Should Schools Teach and Students Learn?" (Vito Perrone); (2) "Is Education for Social Responsibility Anathemic to American Culture? (The answer should be no, but is it?)" (Milton Kleg); and (3) "An Inclusive Reality" (Michael Hartoonian). The second section is "Understanding our Interdependence" and contains three articles: (1) "Conflict Resolutionland: A Round-Trip Tour" (William J. Kreidler); (2) "A New Way of Fighting: Resolving Conflict Creatively" (Linda Lantieri; Tom Roderick); and (3) "Reflections on Conflict Management as an Empowering Process for Students...And for Me" (Joan May T. Cordova). The third section, "Opportunities for Social Contribution," contains one article: "Human Rights Education: A Statewide Commitment" (Nancy Schniedewind; Bonne Sue Adams; Winifred Evers Pardo). The fourth section, "Developing Participatory Understanding," contains three articles: (1) "A Democratic Approach to Teaching about the U.S. Constitution" (Clarissa Sawyer); (2) "Stepping into Other Perspectives: Holistic History and Students at Lakeside School" (Dwight Gibb); and (3) "Using Oral History to Address Social Issues in the Social Studies Classroom" (Sam Totten). The fourth and final section is "Exploring Real World Issues" and includes three articles: (1) "Be Prepared: Using Controversial Topics or Methods in the Classroom" (John Zola); (2) "Teaching for New Ways of Thinking: The ESR Soviet Education Project" (Larry Dieringer); and (3) "Challenges in the ESR-Soviet Collaboration" (Alan Shapiro). (DK)

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Dedication
Seth Kreisberg
1955—1989

Seth was one of ESR's strongest leaders, and it is impossible to measure the loss to our efforts. As many have pointed out in the memorial services held to honor him, Seth was large in every dimension—large in size, large in depth of his concerns and commitment to bring change, large in intellect and understanding, large in talent, and large in his capacity for friendship and love. We shall miss him greatly.

Dick Mayo-Smith, Chairman of ESR's Board of Directors

ESR dedicates its first journal to the memory of Seth.

ESR JOURNAL

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THE REAL ROPES COURSE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Shelley Berman

What we do matters. It matters to those who love us. It matters to those with whom we work and play. It matters to us, and helps us experience integrity. And, what we do matters to the world as it is now, as well as to how it will be in the future. Each of our actions—and our failures to act—sets in motion a steady series of ripples through our environment and our lives.

This is a simple concept. Yet most students in the United States experience a sense of powerlessness to affect constructive social or political change. The odds of success seem overwhelming, the personal costs high, the disappointment inevitable. This is such a powerful trend among both young people and adults that it may be undermining democracy in the U.S.

In 1986, only 16.6% of 18 to 24 year olds voted, and in 1988, only 29% of this age group voted. This has always been the age group with the lowest percentage of voters. But what is most striking is that it is the only category of newly enfranchised voters in our history whose voting patterns have shown a decline since enfranchisement.[1] Jerry Bachman, who has administered the "Monitoring the Future" survey to 17,000 high school seniors each year since 1975, found that since 1978 over 47% of the students surveyed either chose "mostly agree" or "agree" to the statement, "I feel I can do very little to change the way the world is today" and an average of approximately 30% chose "mostly agree" or "agree" in response to, "When I think about all the terrible things that have been happening, it is hard for me to hold out much hope for the world."[2]

It is in this context that many educators have realized that we are not adequately addressing a basic societal need—the nurturing in young people of a sense of social responsibility and social efficacy. For the past decade and maybe more, we have focused our attention on ensuring that students develop at least a basic level of reading, writing, and computation skills, of information, of critical thinking skills. But this is not enough. The progressive education

movement of the first part of the 1900's made the mistake of assuming that if schools focused on individual self-realization, then these self-realized graduates would help create a good society. We are seeing the same mistake in the back-to-basics and cultural literacy movements now, this time with competence replacing individual self-realization. We even see this in the moral development movement which tends to focus on helping students think through personal and, sometimes, social dilemmas while avoiding the immediate need for moral action in the political arena. Individual self-realization, competence, and personal morality are necessary but not sufficient to help create a society that can settle its differences equitably and amicably, cooperatively problem-solve in the face of political and environmental crises and challenges, and set ethical standards of behavior. In fact our failure to teach even basic skills and to develop moral literacy may be partially due to the lack of attention we have given to young people's relationship to the larger social and political arena and to their difficulty finding meaning and purpose beyond self-fulfillment.

Social responsibility—that is, a personal investment in the well-being of others and of the planet—doesn't just happen. It takes intention, attention, and time. It may even take redesigning the culture of schools and classrooms to one which esteems and creates empowerment, cooperation, compassion, and respect. What is surprising is that the theme of citizenship education is deeply embedded in the mission statements and curriculum of most schools. As a former social studies teacher, I know that it was a central goal of my work and of the work of my colleagues. In recent years, however, it has become clearer to me why the many volumes of work in citizenship education have failed in their avowed goal of helping students develop an active, participatory relationship with society. First, these efforts in citizenship education neglect students' experiences of our political culture. The idealized picture of society presented by many of these programs hardly corresponds to the experience of society—often centering on feelings of alienation and powerlessness—that most students have internalized. Second, these programs often teach about democracy without encouraging students to experience their own power and influence, either in the classroom or in the larger world. We teach reading, writing, and math by doing them, but we teach democracy by lecture. Third, by simply presenting information about the democratic process, these citizenship education programs often fail to engage students in genuine, thoughtful inquiry about the various ways that an individual can make a difference in society. Finally, citizenship education has been delegated to high school social studies teachers rather than being integrated into all the subject areas and grade levels, and the fabric of school life. The current drive to develop community service programs is a move in the right direction but still insufficient to address the deeper issues behind students' nonparticipation and alienation.

What the Research Tells Us

The question of what motivates participation is not new, and yet the results of the research efforts in political socialization, prosocial behavior development,

psychosocial development, and moral development give us only a rough glimpse into the development of social responsibility. The literature on political socialization tells us that early in the elementary years children become aware of our political culture, most often adopting the attitudes of their parents. Yet this culture and our political institutions remain abstract and vague. Sigel and Hoskin, authors of one of the major studies of political attitudes among high school students, point out that "politics is, for the most part, irrelevant to their (students) most urgent concerns." And they conclude that "when politics ceases to be remote, young citizens may well muster the skill and the will to inject their views and actions" (1981, pp. 271-2).

Research in prosocial behavior has focused on the development of helping behaviors in a personal rather than social context but has pointed to the significant role parents play in setting standards for children. The work most applicable to the development of social responsibility is the recent work of Martin Hoffman on empathy development. Hoffman disputes Piaget's theory that young children cannot take the perspective of others. In fact, he contends that empathy is innate and that although children may not be able to articulate another person's point of view, they naturally adjust their actions and words to take account of what they think the other person is thinking or feeling. He, like Bettelheim, found that empathy and prosocial behavior can be nurtured by directing the child's attention to the internal states of others (Hoffman, 1984; Bettelheim, 1985). Bettelheim points out that Japanese children may exhibit more self-control and prosocial behavior than American children because "from a very early age the American child is told what to do, while the Japanese child is encouraged not only to consider other persons' feelings but to control himself on the basis of his own deliberations" (Bettelheim, p. 58). For example, in Japan if a child is running around a grocery store the parent does not tell the child that she is wrong or bad, or tell her to stop. The parent simply directs the child's attention to how the grocer feels by asking such questions as, "How do you think it makes the storekeeper feel when you run around like this in his store?"

Recently, the Developmental Studies Center in San Ramon, California, has applied some of the concepts emerging from the research in prosocial behavior to three elementary schools. Seeking to promote such characteristics as helpfulness, fairness, and responsibility, the Center's Child Development Project integrates five elements into the regular academic curriculum. These five elements include: 1) teaching cooperation through cooperative activities, 2) promoting helping skills through cross-age helping and sharing activities both in the classroom and in the school at large, 3) exposing students to positive role models both fictional and real, 4) enhancing students' ability to understand another's motives, feelings, perceptions, intentions, and customs through role playing and other regular class activities, and 5) developing self-control and internalizing core helping values through "positive discipline," that is, emphasizing ethical principles that underlie rules and involving students in rule setting and problem-solving. The project has been successful in

documenting increases in students' helping behaviors, cooperation, and ability to deal with conflicts in the affluent, suburban schools that are currently part of the study. The Center is now beginning to work with multiracial, working class schools to determine if the model will work in other settings. Because the students in this longitudinal study are still young, it is impossible to determine if these skills will translate into a greater ability to enter the social and political arena with a sense of empowerment.

Psychologists who have written about psychosocial development—Erik Erikson, Kenneth Kenniston, and Robert Coles—tell us that children, especially adolescents, need to experience the connection between their personal history and human history for them to form a positive identity. Erikson identifies a deep human need for a way of organizing both our personal and our social reality into a larger whole that can give us meaning and direction. In Keniston's study of alienated youth he writes, "[People's] relationship to time and to history is of central importance to [them]. . . . Behind this sense of time lies the universal need for historical relatedness, manifest partly as a desire to understand where one comes from and where one is going, partly as a more concrete need to define one's relationship to one's own individual and familial past and future, partly as a need to feel oneself part of a group and a universe with an intelligible past related to a comprehensive future. [People's] sense of [their] own place in time, and of [their] place in a society and world located in history, is central to [their] definition of [themselves], just as a society's definition of its place in history is one of the most distinguishing features of that society" (1960, p. 237).

Erikson's and Keniston's studies are of men. "Historical relatedness" may be a need that is reflective of a justice mode of reasoning that is more common in men's thinking. There are few studies examining women's motivation to participate in social change or the vehicles women choose. Recent work studying women's moral development and ways of knowing suggests that care for the well-being of others and the overall well-being of the planet may be more common than "historical relatedness" among women.

The research in moral development has pointed to two basic moral motives, justice and care. The study of the development of justice reasoning has been most closely associated with the work of Lawrence Kohlberg and his six stages of moral development. Once the leading force in moral development theory, this work has been balanced by that of such researchers as Carol Gilligan, Jean Baker-Miller, and Nel Noddings who point out that care, responsiveness to others, and connectedness to others is an equally primary moral motive to fairness and justice. Yet both schools of thought agree that moral development is facilitated by engagement and connection. For Kohlberg this meant helping students engage in instructional moral dilemmas as well as live in "just communities" in which students would confront the real moral dilemmas involved in community decision-making. For Gilligan and Noddings this means giving young people the experience of real connection with others—seeing and being seen, knowing and being known, hearing and being heard. In *Women's Ways of Knowing* Mary Belenky and her co-authors apply this to education and call it "connected teaching."

What all this research tells us is that children begin constructing their relationship with the political world early in life, that parents, teachers, and other role models are critical for the formation of a positive and empowered relationship with society, and that the most effective means of helping students develop this relationship is to give them the opportunity to enter and engage the real world around them.

Our "Relationship" with Society

My research in the development of social consciousness over the last two years confirms this earlier research and leads me to believe that each of us develops a relationship to society and to the world. Furthermore, the way we give meaning to this relationship determines the nature of our participation in the world. I've deliberately chosen the term "relationship" because, like a relationship with another person, our relationship with society includes such powerful factors as interconnection, emotion, influence, and vulnerability.

I also use the term "relationship" because it shifts the context of our thinking. Too often we focus our attention on individual choice and individual responsibility. Most moral education and moral development theory seems directed at the way people make choices, at the way they balance their individual needs with the needs of others. There isn't much attention paid to the social context for these moral decisions. I've found that people don't make moral decisions in isolation, especially not decisions that relate to larger social and

political issues. These decisions emerge directly from people's relationship to society—from what they see as the dominant morality in the political culture, and from their sense of their personal ability to influence that culture.

Because it is difficult for many people to describe verbally their relationship to society, I've been exploring another approach. I've asked people first to *draw* the way they see their own relationship to society before they attempt to describe it. I've now collected such pencil, crayon, or marking pen drawings from elementary school children, from high school and college students, and from adults who represent a wide range of lifestyles and viewpoints. These drawings usually reveal complex feelings towards society—sometimes a rich mosaic of interconnectedness, sometimes the painful expression of alienation and powerlessness, and sometimes the struggle to reconcile both hope and pain. Although we all exist in relationship to society, I've come to realize that people seldom talk about the nature of this relationship and how they feel in it. The class of sixth graders, four of whose drawings are reprinted here, were eager to have the opportunity to talk about their joys and frustrations, their hopes and their fears. As these drawings reveal, children were well aware of the world around them. They saw their relationship to society in very different ways and the dialogue that emerged from these drawings was rich and vital. Young people want to be heard and they want to know how others see things.

Society is just a big blob around me. In my little air bubble there is only my family and friends. I feel different than most of my friends. Maybe it is the way I was brought up or maybe my views on life. I care about the world but I don't think it concerns me even though it does.

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Section 1. These are the people in a society. Everyone is supposedly equal in a society. They are supposedly not different but they aren't really. They are all different.

Section 2. This is the surroundings of a society, how they affect everyone. At one point in your life you'll probably feel enclosed and surrounded by all these things and they'll really affect you.

Section 3. This is the politics in a society and how the power people have such an affect on everyone and everything. War, peace, life, death, hunger, etc.

From working with these drawings, I've realized that helping young people develop a sense of social responsibility means opening a conversation about this relationship. We cannot impose attitudes and understandings. Instead, we must begin a dialogue by listening carefully to young people's ideas and questions. Not only do they need to feel heard and validated in order to grow into meaningful adult roles in society; but we, too, need to learn from them what their real issues are in order to facilitate their growth most effectively.

Helping students develop a sense of social responsibility also means directly and intentionally nurturing in them a positive and empowered relationship with society. We need to promote a passionate and informed engagement with the world around them. As the Developmental Studies Center found in their work on prosocial behavior, there is no one intervention that is instrumental in accomplishing this. Instead it is a combination of factors that make social responsibility a core element of the curriculum, the climate of the classroom, and the daily life of the school. I would like to suggest six factors that can help accomplish this.

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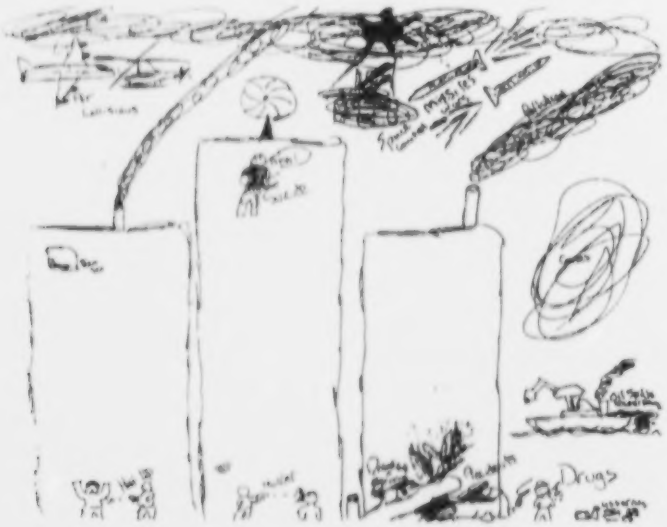
Educating for the Development of Social Consciousness

Educating for the development of social consciousness means emphasizing a different set of questions: What does the way I lead my life mean for the lives of others? What is my hope for the future? Are my actions consistent with the way I would like the world to be? What can we do *together* as a community, as a society, and as a world community, that will promote our common good and our common wealth? How can I contribute in a meaningful way to creating a more just, peaceful, and ecologically sound world? Educationally, this means balancing our focus on personal self-realization and personal achievement with an equal focus on social self-realization and collective achievement. When teaching for social self-realization, how we teach and the culture of our classrooms and schools will be of even greater importance than what we teach. They will need to model for students the values and principles of care, justice, empowerment, community, and social responsibility.

Understanding our Interdependence

The first step is helping students develop an understanding of our social and ecological interdependence. The crises of the last decade—the nuclear threat, destruction of the environment, terrorism, hunger and homelessness on a mass scale, and local and international violence—have demonstrated the smallness of our planet and our inextricable connection with others around the globe. There is no getting "away" anymore. We not only have to understand our interdependence but we need to learn how to get along in an interdependent world.



This is not easy for us. Independence and self-reliance are our dominant national values and inhibit our ability to function in interdependent situations. They are not only pervasive in our political culture but have dominated the "ideology" of child development. This psychological ideology, articulated most clearly by Erikson, holds that the pinnacle of development is autonomy, individuation, and independence—standing on one's own. Gilligan and others argue that this construction of development is misleading, that what we have always seen as the adolescent's struggle for autonomy is not a struggle to separate from others, but in fact an attempt to renegotiate her or his relationship and achieve a position of equality and influence. The adolescent desires connection, affiliation, and involvement but wants to experience his or her own power, authority, and influence within that connection. Our culture doesn't give equal credibility to this aspect of the adolescent's struggle and therefore the risk of detachment is heightened. As Robert Bellah and his co-authors point out in their study of American society, *Habits of the Heart*, this emphasis on autonomy has produced a "culture of separation" that has undermined our sense of community and our ability to function as a society.

There are a number of movements in education that are attempting to develop our understanding of how to live in an interdependent world. The prominent ones have been the global education movement, the environmental education movement, the multicultural education movement, and the cooperative learning movement. There are also some promising new experiments. People at MIT have been working with teachers in Brattleboro, Vermont, to integrate systems dynamics into the curriculum. The use of systems dynamics is an effort to help students see problems holistically, to understand the workings of whole systems whether they are social, economic, or environmental and to see the interconnections between these systems. Other schools are experimenting with interdisciplinary courses that help students to integrate knowledge from the different disciplines and to see the interrelatedness of these disciplines. All of these efforts are vitally important to help students grasp and work with interdependence, but as yet all these efforts are add-ons. They are imposed on an educational structure that is increasingly pressured to be accountable for a knowledge and skill base that does not give issues of interdependence priority. If we truly want to develop socially conscious young people, we will have to change our priorities so that basic social skills, appreciation for cultural diversity and the ecological balance, and systems analysis are central organizing principles of the curriculum.

Opportunities for Social Contribution

A second step in nurturing social consciousness and social responsibility is giving students the opportunity to contribute to the lives of others and to the improvement of the world around them. Again, this is not something that should happen just in high school; it should be deeply embedded in curriculum for the early elementary grades on. What children do to serve the community matters less than whether it is something they see as important and something

they choose. The opportunities and designs are endless. One elementary school has developed a buddy system in which older children read to and help younger children. Students in a primary school in Brookline, Massachusetts, expressed their concern about starvation in Africa to teachers who helped them organize a year-long, schoolwide effort to raise money for relief efforts. An inner city elementary school in New York adopted a program for autistic children to teach their students that no matter how difficult their own circumstances might be they could still lend a helping hand to others. The entire staff and the students of one middle school in Portland, Oregon, takes one day a month to volunteer in teams with local social service and community organizations. One high school in the Boston area has created an in-house community service program to help make the school a more liveable, humane, and productive community. Other high schools have begun requiring a set number of hours of community service for graduation. I know that in my own teaching, the most powerful activity I ever engaged my students in was to give them the semester-long project of making a difference on some issue of concern to them and reporting back to the class on their results.

Whether it is having students help each other or having students participate in local community efforts, students need instruction and coaching from adults. Sadly, these are new skills for many. Young people need to learn how best to help others, how to be patient, and how to tolerate the slow pace of change. They also need to hear about the success stories of others—students who have reclaimed forests, cleaned up rivers, improved their school environment, helped the homeless.[3] Community service efforts not only give students the opportunity to contribute and to see that they can make a difference. They build self-esteem and they allow students to experience themselves as part of the larger network of people who are helping to create a better world.[4]

Opportunities to Be a Responsible Member of a Community

Becoming socially conscious means becoming aware of group needs. It means developing a "consciousness of the group" so that an individual begins to sense the atmosphere or climate that is present in the group, to observe how people's interaction influences the productivity of the group, and to understand the impact his or her actions have on the group as a whole. Becoming socially responsible means using this consciousness to intervene to improve the group's ability to live and work together. Developing a "consciousness of the group" is a skill that can be nurtured, but one that can only be taught experientially. Because the style of instruction in most classrooms is either individualistic or competitive, children do not get the opportunity to develop this skill. Although cooperative learning techniques help, the best way to teach this consciousness is to create classrooms and schools that are functioning communities.

Community is often used very loosely. When I ask people in workshops to think about a meaningful experience of community in their own

lives a rich definition emerges: a community is a group of people who acknowledge their interconnectedness, have a sense of their common purpose, respect their differences, share in group decision-making as well as in responsibility for the actions of the group, and support each other's growth. Classrooms and schools can be these kinds of communities but it takes time, intention, and new forms of shared leadership.

There are some specific strategies that help create community. The first is to have the class or school create a shared set of values or goals that serve as a reminder of their reason for being there. Some teachers have worked with their classes to create constitutions or bills of rights. Others simply have students talk about what rules can help the class function most effectively and how everyone can collaborate to make those rules work. In my own classes, I begin by asking students, "What guidelines could we establish for ourselves that would not only make this a productive class but would also make this a safe place for people to share what they are thinking and feeling, and a safe place for people to make mistakes and learn from them?"

A second strategy is to establish structures that allow students to participate in decision-making about the important issues that emerge. These can take the form of class meetings or of schoolwide "town meetings" but they need to provide students with the opportunity to share their concerns and to address important issues and conflicts confronting the community. My experience in teaching in and working with democratic schools has taught me that direct democracy is far more effective than representative democracy in creating community. It is in this setting that students experience cooperation, learn how to make good decisions, see the consequences of their actions and decisions, and learn to cope effectively with diversity and conflict.

A third strategy is to pay attention to the group's process and have students collectively evaluate the climate. It is very important to make process observations to the class. Some examples might be: "We haven't functioned well together during the past several days. Are there some reasons for that? Should we be doing some things differently?" or "It seems that people get angry when other people express an opinion that they don't agree with. Is there a way we can listen to them that would communicate more respect for what they have to say?" or "The class sometimes jokes or laughs when someone shares something painful, as if we didn't want to hear it." These process observations teach the class to think about the group as a whole and model for students how to make effective interventions.

Another way to accomplish this is to use checklists or questionnaires that ask students to comment on how the class is doing in its efforts to work together. Nancy Schniedewind and Ellen Davidson have published two such forms for elementary students in their book *Cooperative Learning, Cooperative Lives;* one asks students to evaluate their contributions to the class, the other asks students to think about how well they have listened to others and others have listened to them. Keith Grove, a high school math teacher, has developed a form he uses in his classes that asks students to describe incidents "where

someone helped you understand," "where someone seemed to help another member of the class understand," and "where someone helped our class feel that we are working together." He then asks students to reflect on their own behavior with such questions as: "What do you do which contributes to the success of the class?" "What could you do differently which would help the class have greater success?" and "What do you do, if anything, which hinders the success of the class?" He collects the forms, summarizes them for the class, and allows time for the class to discuss issues that have emerged about how the class is working. In general, we tend to shy away from these discussions because they might raise issues we will not know how to work with. In a more authoritarian classroom, the teacher is responsible for order and structure. In a community, these are collective concerns and the only way for students to develop the ability to cooperate and to work well in groups is to give them the necessary observational tools and social skills.

Community cannot exist without conflict. In fact, as M. Scott Peck points out in his recent book on community building, the only way to develop a healthy community is through the successful negotiation of conflict. In order to build community in classrooms and schools, we need to teach conflict resolution skills directly and to use the conflicts that naturally emerge as learning opportunities. Three of the most effective resources in this area are William Kreidler's book for elementary schools, *Creative Conflict Resolution;* the Community Board Program's secondary curriculum, *Conflict Resolution: A Secondary School Curriculum;* and Educators for Social Responsibility's K-12 curriculum, *Perspectives.*

Community also cannot exist without affirmation. Community building means finding ways in which the community can affirm its members as well as acknowledging its own accomplishments. In community, people become rich resources to each other. Communities need stories, heroes and heroines, rituals, and celebrations. This is the oil that makes a community function smoothly. It demonstrates that its members are valued and that people not only care about each other but care about the group as a whole.

Finally, to build community we need to demonstrate new forms of leadership. Leaders—a student in a leadership position in the class or school, the teacher, the principal, the superintendent—need to share decision-making power with the group. They need to trust that the group's collective intelligence is more powerful than any one individual's. They need to know how to facilitate, organize, negotiate, but most of all, listen to the needs and concerns of the group. And they need to promote others taking leadership as well.

Out of the experience of community young people not only become conscious of group needs and group process, but they begin to understand the meaning of the common good, to appreciate that they do make a difference, and to develop a sense of relatedness to the larger human community.

Developing Basic Participatory Understandings and Skills

Social studies programs do a fairly good job of acquainting students with our

political institutions and our history. Yet the age we live in demands a broader and bolder set of citizenship skills. We are collectively faced with enormous long-term problems that demand complicated solutions and ongoing attention. Too often, in our hunger for certainty, we grab for simple and inadequate solutions to these complex problems. We fall for slogans of "just say no" and treat symptoms rather than addressing root causes. Then when these solutions fail, as they must, we blame the victim or the system rather than acknowledging our own short-sightedness. At the same time, politics has become more vicious, confrontational, and oppositional, and interest groups have become more uncompromising. Young people often withdraw from this frustrating and contentious environment. If we are to build a renewed sense of direction and purpose in the United States and encourage young people to enter the political arena, we have to give them the skills to address our most complex problems and to replace the politics of confrontation and opposition with the politics of reconciliation and dialogue.

There are four new skills that young people need to learn. They need to learn *organizing skills* so that they can work well in groups and in organizations to affect change. They need to learn *consensus-building skills* so that they can transform oppositional debates into productive dialogues. They need to learn group *problem-solving skills* so that they can draw upon the diverse resources and talents in a group to come up with constructive solutions to complex problems. And finally they need *long-term thinking skills* so that they can evaluate the impact that potential solutions may have upon future generations. Although these skills will enable young people to feel competent to enter the social and political arena, they are equally applicable to family, work, and neighborhood issues. They build personal efficacy as well as political efficacy.

To develop the courage to participate, young people will also need the hope that is generated by presenting them with examples of individuals and organizations that are making a difference. We need to tell them of the Mahatma Gandhis and the Martin Luther Kings but also of the people who live down the street who are doing what they can to improve the neighborhood, and of the multitude of organizations that have emerged to help individuals make a difference. We need to put students in touch with these people and organizations so that they can see how deeply people care and how worthwhile it is to participate in creating change.

This kind of education is not about turning out political activists. Rather it is helping young people see that their actions and choices are social and political statements. Their daily actions are creating the world as it is and as it will be. What they can come to understand is that we make a significant difference in our relationships with friends, in our work, in raising children, in our role as consumers, not by the political positions we espouse but by how we live—the consciousness and integrity we bring to our actions and the care we take with others.

Stepping Out of One's Own Perspective

Although stepping out of one's own perspective is embodied in several of the

other strategies for nurturing social consciousness, I have separated it because of its critical importance. In the field of conflict management and conflict negotiations, it is commonly understood that you cannot resolve a difference until you fully understand the other side's interests and values. It is only then that you can build on mutual interests without compromising each other's values. To develop a social consciousness means to be able to step out of one's own perspective and to take on the perspectives of others so that you can fully grasp the concerns and interests of those with whom you live. But even more than that it means looking at our own perspective from the vantage point of another. It means presenting ourselves to ourselves and being open to reevaluating our opinions and beliefs.

Taking the position of another and developing self-reflectiveness are very difficult. They compel us to live with ambiguity and to be continually open to change. This does not mean that we avoid taking positions but that we take them knowing that we must allow for the possibility that we may be wrong. It does not mean a lack of criticalness or of ethical standards but that through our humility and openness we are able to evaluate and act in situations of social conflict with compassion and insight. The work of William Perry on the forms of ethical and intellectual development and the work of Robert Selman on perspective taking are particularly revealing in how powerful and productive this effort can be. Perry, in his study of students confronted with multiple, competing perspectives, found that students moved from either/or thinking through relativism to a commitment to a point of view with an openness to change. Selman, who studies interpersonal perspective taking, found that by teaching perspective-taking skills students could move from egocentric and impulsive interpersonal negotiation strategies to mutual and collaborative strategies.

There are many instructional strategies that can help students develop their ability to take another's perspective and to reflect on their own thinking. Role playing and journal writing are two very common strategies. At an elementary level it may be simply introducing that there are different perspectives, that some people think one thing and that others think another. Martin Hoffman's inductive discipline—directing a child's attention to the feelings of another—is another strategy. At the secondary level, ESR has developed a particularly powerful tool called methodological belief. This exercise asks students to go beyond "understanding" a perspective to fully entering the perspective so that they may find some truth in it of which they are not now aware. It asks students to temporarily suspend their disbelief and see the world through the eyes of this perspective. It is only after entering it that they then critique it for its inadequacies and flaws. After doing this exercise in class over a semester one student wrote that he had

> *. . . learned to be less dogmatic about my ideas, more open to change and other opinions. It's nice now at the end of the course to feel a little less ignorant by recognizing my capacity for ignorance. But it is also not too fun to lose ignorance because ignorance was bliss. I think because the issues*

are so complicated that just learning about it is important. In class we were asking what can we do about it [nuclear war] and what should be our next step. Well, I think education in itself is pretty good because instead of just picking a Republican ticket or a Democratic ticket or choosing a specific issue and fighting for that we are constantly reevaluating our ideas and helping people reevaluate their ideas too—just sharing all the ideas.

Exploring Real World Issues

The final strategy for nurturing the development of social consciousness and social responsibility is what may be the most obvious—to help students enter the dialogue about the real world issues that concern them. Examining the social and political impact of our actions should not simply be relegated to the social studies department. Science classes can investigate the links between science, technology and society. Math classes can examine how numbers are used in our political process to persuade or deceive. English classes can focus on the literature of social change. Business classes can focus on the larger social and ethical questions raised by business practices. Art classes can study the use of art in creating propaganda. Even at an elementary level there are appropriate strategies for engaging children in meaningful conversations about social and political issues (write to ESR for Susan Jones's 10 Point Model for Teaching Controversial Issues). Learning about and discussing social and political issues as well as the social and political implications of our actions should be an integral part of school life. Yet our goal must never be to indoctrinate or enlist students in our own causes but rather to help them think critically and creatively about the problems we face and empower them to make a difference in the world.

Too often instruction in controversial issues simply presents students with the depressing evidence of the problems we face. This leads to despair rather than empowerment as students realize the critical nature of our problems and the political conflict and stalemate that prevent us from adequately solving these problems. We need to go beyond this. We need to present multiple perspectives on problems and help them search for underlying sources. We need to go in depth so that they can fully understand not only the problem but the potential solutions. We need to teach how conflict resolution strategies can be applied to depolarize the conflict and promote dialogue. We need to give them opportunities for involvement and action. We need to allow them to ask the hard questions that we may not want to hear.

Adolescents, especially, see the contradictions that we have justified and ask us about the integrity of our beliefs and actions. We need to respond openly and honestly because what they are really asking is if there is the possibility of living with integrity in their own lives.

But most of all, we need to follow *their* thinking and work with their thinking. Bettelheim points out that, "The reason for the higher academic achievement of Japanese youngsters may well be that the Japanese child . . . is invited to think things out on his own, a habit that stands him in good stead when he has to master academic material. The American child, in contrast, is

expected to conform his decisions and actions to what he is told to do. This expectation certainly does not encourage him to do his own thinking" (Bettelheim, p. 58). A second grade teacher taught me to begin each unit by asking students three questions—What do you know about this? What do you think you know but are not sure about? What questions do you have?—and then structure the unit around the questions the students indicated were most pressing for them. Teaching this way not only helped me understand my students better but developed in them a respect for their knowledge, their thinking ability, and their power to guide their learning.

When we teach about real world issues we need to be able to listen for the things we didn't know were there, for the unexpected. Each generation brings its own perspective to the problems we face. In listening to their perspectives we have the opportunity to reassess our own.

Conclusion

As teachers, we want our students to reach their fullest potential. We care about them and want them to reach beyond what they see as their limits. Probably there is no better symbol for this than the outdoor adventure programs, outward bound programs, and ropes courses that have become a basic part of the more progressive physical education programs. These programs challenge us to go beyond our fears and our limits to see our potential for courage and accomplishment. Yet the real ropes course is participating in our social and political system. If we focus our attention on this ropes course, we can help our students see their potential for courage and accomplishment in helping to create a more just, peaceful, and ecologically sound world.

NOTES

1. Data is from the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, 421 New Jersey Ave., S.E., Washington, DC 20003.

2. The Monitoring the Future Study, 1975-86, Lloyd D. Johnston, Jerald G. Bachman, and Patrick M. O'Malley (Project Directors), Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

3. Two excellent resources on participation and community service are ESR's curriculum guides *Taking Part* for elementary school students and *Making History* for secondary school students.

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OUR RELATIONSHIP TO SOCIETY

WHAT SHOULD SCHOOLS TEACH AND STUDENTS LEARN?

Vito Perrone

I am pleased to be here for this ESR organized conference. While most of us who are present know well ESR's history—its commitments and its work—I want to offer in my introductory comments a modest reaffirmation. ESR had its beginnings with the growing escalation of weapons and the threat of a nuclear holocaust. By putting forth the belief that education—teaching and learning in and out of schools—is about life and not death, ESR challenged the conventions of Cold War thought and the corresponding balance of terror being promoted as natural. It assumed the position that education had always to be seen in moral as well as intellectual terms. And as such, that teachers, as well as their students, needed to address more consciously issues of responsibility in all spheres of life. This position was translated into concerns about the environment, social justice, equity, cooperation, ethical thought, and peace. ESR calls for us as educators to be guided by large purposes for our students and our communities, local, national, and worldwide, to take a lead from Emily Dickinson who wrote, "I dwell in possibilities" and "not wishing to miss the dawn, I open every door." It asks us to keep in mind, in our work, such questions as: What kind of human community do we want for *all* of our children? To Shelley Berman and Roberta Snow, and so many others who have kept ESR going, keeping before us that large dawn of possibility, my personal, and I suspect for all here, a collective Thanks!

There are, of course, several different points of entry that are possible for my presentation. In fact, I will make several entries, though the guiding theme will be *large purposes*. It is out of large purposes that we are genuinely able to speak about what schools should teach and students learn.

At its best, whether we think of the present or the future, education is first and foremost a moral and intellectual endeavor, always beginning with children and young people and their intentions and needs, always rooted in powerful purposes, the forest rather than the trees.

By and large, though, we tend, in most of our schools, to be more attentive to technical than moral and intellectual directions, the isolated pieces, the trees and not the forest. Education at its best is not sufficiently the preoccupation. There is, it seems, more concern about whether children learn the mechanics of reading and writing than grow to love deeply reading and writing; learn *about* democratic practice than have practice in democracy; hear about knowledge, essentially being in settings where knowledge is dispensed, than gain experience in constructing knowledge; engage in competition rather than learn the power of cooperation and collaborative thought; see the world narrowly, as simple and ordered rather than broad, complex, and uncertain; come to accept the vested authority that exists around them in organizational structures and text rather than challenge such authority, bringing a healthy skepticism to the world; and accept the belief that art and music—the aesthetic aspects of life—call for a special talent, and, therefore, are open only to a few rather than being fully accessible for all. To invest so much in the technical aspects of education is to assure an uninspiring education, one that will surely miss most of the moral imperatives which surround children and young people and are related directly to concerns of social responsibility.

In regard to the arts, their limited presence in most schools is clearly symbolic of how fully technical formulations have come to dominate school practice. Why aren't the arts central to every child's education? Seen as a critical bond linking various areas of study—math, science, social studies, literature? Sybill Marshall, an English painter-teacher, captured some of this integrative spirit as she noted:

> *For the scientist as well as the mathematician, for the poet as well as the sociologist, for the doctor and the archaeologist and the teacher, for any human being caught up in the intricacies of ordinary, everyday life, (education) must provide the eye that sees, the mind that comprehends, and the spirit which leaps to respond. Art teaches and develops them all.*

One can't seriously examine human culture at its best and not come to such understandings. How can we be serious about learning and say there isn't time for the arts? And, of course, I could add community service, and many other direct entries into the world. I cited the arts as they are so visibly lacking and at their best so untechnical. They are a path to human feeling, to an emotional life, an antidote to the numbing pressures that surround us, that let us accept violence, inequality, and hunger as distant things. What ought to guide us as we consider the schools in relation to large purposes? Very little of what I say will be new—but possibly in the resaying, there will be some renewed basis for reflection and action in intellectual and moral rather than technical terms. And you need to know that I have limited my discussion of large purposes with a view that each of you can fill the story out.

What we know most about children and young people is that they are always learning. This is their nature. As they touch the earth, observe the culture that surrounds them and listen to stories and speak, they are gaining a

personal relationship with the world, gaining what Jean Piaget calls a balance changing the world and changing themselves.

If we kept such a view about children constantly before us, we wouldn't be so quick to assume clinical approaches to education, full of labels and beliefs in deficits. Not to begin with children's natural strengths and energy, letting that become the starting point, is to limit the possibilities, to assure for too many children an education with too little power. Do we fit the child to the school as well as make the school fit the child? I believe the school as an institution has come to overshadow the child.

In this regard, we are called increasingly in the schools to see our world through a lens of economic competitiveness, the latest of the public imperatives. Today, the focus is on Japan and West Germany, with Korea, Taiwan, China, Singapore, and Brazil, among others, in the wings, close at hand. We need educational settings that challenge young people intellectually and morally, that provide those skills and understandings that are generative of ongoing learning in the schools and in the world. We must want for our children and young people the best education we can imagine. But placing so much stress on economic competitiveness—stronger math and science programs to win the war of technology, for example—is distractive educationally and morally. It is a formulation that too often prevents us from seeing the world as fully connected, its peoples having mutual needs and growth everywhere being a matter for celebration. It also does violence to the spiritual dimensions of education, that which brings awe, penetrates body and soul. It too easily becomes too instrumental. The zero sum formulations associated with competition—gains in Japan meaning necessary losses in the United States—are also self-defeating. Representing the world in these terms masks—causes us to minimize—the inequities that exist and the imperatives to work actively toward their redress. Is hunger in Africa acceptable? Is the burden of debt carried by Brazil, Peru, Mexico, Nigeria, and Poland their just due? Is that where competitiveness leads? It has that potential.

To speak of economic competitiveness in relation to the world also has an impact at the micro-level of the school and classroom. Must our goal in the schools also be rooted in competition? Or can cooperation be a principal objective? What are some of the ways to think about this? Shall we, for example, track or not track? Provide challenge for some and little for others? Place limits on the possibilities for some and open the world to others? Perpetuate inequities or work toward their eradication? Clutter our discourse with labels which pit students against each other, by race, or class, or perceptions of intelligence, or gift? Shall we accept the message of test scores or go beyond them? How many of us have seriously challenged our various ways of separating students? Do we speak about the inequities in the world and not attend to those which exist in our schools?

What if we spent time on the question, *What do we most want our students to come to understand as a result of their schooling?* Reading and writing might be a quick response. But is that enough? What if they learn to read and

write but don't like to read or write and don't? What if they don't read the newspapers and magazines, or can't find beauty in a poem or love story? Don't see Romeo and Juliet in their own lives? What if they don't go as adults to artistic events, don't listen to a broad range of music, aren't optimistic about the world and their place in it, don't notice the trees and the sunset, don't look at the stars, are indifferent to older citizens, can't participate in politics or community life, aren't prepared for the responsibility of parenthood, don't have a vision of themselves as thoughtful mothers and fathers, and are nutritionally and psychologically abusive to themselves? And what if they can locate the Union of South Africa but don't know anything about apartheid, can't feel the pain surrounded with it, know where Nicaragua is but don't know about the United States' long military involvement there and how that affects the politics of Central America, know about the loneliness of many of our elderly, but make no contact with the elderly, know about hunger and waste collectively tons of food each day. I could, of course, carry this litany out further.

We have more than enough to do to create for children and young people genuine communities of learning. Seeing our work around formulations of competition won't help us do well the first things, the human things.

We often speak about children and young people in our society as "the future." What do we imply by such a formulation? Mostly preservation, or change? Assuring that children can live in the world as it is *or* assuring the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that will enable them, as well, to change the world, to construct on their terms new possibilities? How we think about that will say a lot about what we do in our schools, the ideas we explore, the questions we raise, the books we read, the experiences we provide. To raise such questions is, of course, to bring the question of purposes more fully in view, to imply the need to keep large hopes before us, to make use of a language and ideas that inspire us beyond our current practices. To those who worry about large hopes being guides, I can only say that when our hopes, our language, and our practices match, we can be assured that our work is already in a state of decline, that we have lost much that is vital. Alfred North Whitehead wrote in this regard, "When ideals have sunk to the level of practice, the result is stagnation." Carlos Fuentes frames it a bit differently but I think powerfully. He writes: "We say justice, we say development, we say democracy. Words won't bring them: without the words, they will never exist."

In relation to this Jean Piaget argued that the principal goal of education in the schools should be the creation of "men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done—men and women who are creative, inventive and discoverers . . . who can be critical, can verify, and not accept everything they are offered." Thomas Jefferson expressed a similar view about the purposes of public education and life in American society.

I ask often in this regard, are our children being provided a basis for active participation in the life of their communities? Are they learning the meaning of social responsibility, of citizenship writ large?

If we aren't clear about such questions, keeping them in mind with everything we do, making them a part of our ongoing discourse, we tend to fill our schools with contradictions—which tend over time to foster cynicism and limited support, hardly the basis for making them the centers for inquiry, authority and change they need to be.

At a recent Peace Studies Symposium at the University of North Dakota, Brian Petkau, a Canadian teacher, presented *A Prairie Puzzle*, a powerful personal statement about the presence of nuclear missiles across the North Dakota landscape and what these weapons represent in terms of danger to human life. Several young North Dakota students who were in the audience expressed considerable anger about "how little they knew." They asked why they hadn't learned more about the missile fields, the kinds of weapons that existed and something about their control mechanisms, the cost of these weapons, and importantly, they stressed, their potential as targets. In not making the nuclear arms in North Dakota, or in the country, or in the world, a matter of serious study in the schools these students attended, what kinds of values were being expressed? Were students being prepared for active citizenship?

In contrast, with regard to the expression of values, at an elementary school in Revere, Massachusetts, the principal of an all-white, fully English-speaking school, upon learning several years ago that a large number of Cambodian children would be in the school in the fall, started a process aimed at inclusion and social learning of a large sort. The principal and teachers made a decision that it was critical for everyone in the school—children, teachers, custodians, secretaries, lunch workers—to know who these Cambodian children were, where they had come from, and why they were coming to Revere. *Getting Ready for the Cambodian Children* became the full curriculum for several months. The train of normal coverage was stopped. It was a real curriculum, and as a result it was vital. Those in the school community learned how to speak to the Cambodian children and also gained considerable knowledge about their cultural patterns as well as their suffering. As part of their preparation, they learned about prejudice and the harm that prejudice brings to persons who are different. They also learned how prejudice disrupts communities—whether schools or neighborhoods or cities. Their learning had meaning, and it made a visible difference. It grew out of social values and commitments and a willingness to make decisions related to such values and commitments. Unfortunately, it was an unusual response. It ought to be the *usual*.

It is also encouraging to be in schools—though I wish I could report on thousands rather than a few—where Peace Studies is being seen as a legitimate inquiry—where students are learning about peacemakers and about the alternative choices that are available as they examine current international struggles, where they are beginning to understand that peace has large meanings—that violence pertains not just to war and physical conflict, but to situations in which persons are not provided adequate food or shelter, educational and employment opportunities, or personal liberty.

Some of the most interesting productive attempts I have seen in the schools to focus on Peace have worked around the following themes: What is Peace? What is Peacemaking? How can problems be addressed nonviolently? How can students be involved in Peacemaking? The possibilities around these themes are, I believe, endless—in the elementary as well as the secondary school. Exploring the language of hope, filling it out, giving it greater breadth and depth of meaning has also been productive. Schools are, after all, places where language and its meanings are supposed to be taken seriously, listened to carefully, thought about freshly.

To bring a richer definition to peace, for example, to fill out more completely its contours, is an important means of bringing the schools and the world beyond the schools closer together. And, of course, there are many other words, conceptions, beliefs, that are in need of being filled out, given larger cultural and historical meanings. In the age in which we live, too much of our important language seems to be slipping away, becoming unfamiliar, losing its imaginative, metaphoric, generative power. We are, after all, only a few short years beyond Orwell's *1984*, and the novel's concerns for the distortion of language. What makes these peace-related themes particularly productive is that teachers and students can enter them as co-inquirers, persons who together attempt to create a vision of peace, and identify and practice the skills that make for peacemaking. To be a co-inquirer is to assume, of course, a value orientation.

While I know that there are many pressures to keep social and moral values out of the curriculum and the schools, to stay close to the technical, that which can be approached from a distance, we would do better to engage peace studies more consciously, to understand that the decision not to is as political and value-laden as the decision to engage in such study.

Robert Bellah and his associates in their popular *Habits of the Heart* suggest in this regard that adults are having increasing difficulty explaining their commitments to their children. But children and young people need to know that their parents and teachers have important values. Those beliefs and values come through in many ways. What kinds of values do we present as educators, how do we express caring deeply about the students? and the society? How do we act out our citizenship, show our love for learning? Do we display our ongoing inquisitiveness about the world—how it works and why it works in those ways? Do we ask powerful questions? Are we critical? Do we seek alternative explanations? Do we ask often about events being examined, and what they mean? and why we should care? And do we engage each other about such things?

Friedrich Froebel, a theoretical and practical giant in the early childhood field used the garden metaphor extensively in his writing about children—that sense of unfolding, blooming, and flowering. His metaphor is worth reflecting more upon.

Experiences do, as Froebel suggested, build on each other: the more powerful they are, the larger their potential for being fully educative, fully generative. While each stage of life, each experience is important in its own

right, each is also integrally connected to what precedes and follows it. Such an understanding should cause us to ask always about the continuities between the experience and content of preschools and the primary grades, the primary and intermediate grades, the intermediate grades and the middle/junior high schools, and middle schools and high schools, and the importance of returning at each level of schooling to earlier themes, even texts, as well as not closing off ideas and areas of knowledge being explored beyond a particular level. Is it possible, for example, to go to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts too many times? To the Smithsonian too many times? To reread books too many times? To revisit Martin Luther King's life too many times? Or Dorothy Day's life too many times? Or the homeless too many times? Or Three Mile Island too many times? I hear primary children everywhere told: "You don't want to read that book again," or "You will learn about that when you get to the fifth grade." Such refrains are replayed all along the schooling track. That, by the way, is one of the ways we put off the tough questions surrounding the world. We put off the tough questions also by staying close to textbooks and worksheets and not real text. I met few students in the 1950's who hadn't read John Hersey's *Hiroshima*, what Jay Lipton has called *our text*. I meet few students today who have read it.

We also put off the tough questions by our need to cover so much—to get through each day so many different subject matters, closing off in the process so many possibilities.

Returning to the question of large purposes, we would do well to echo Herbert Spencer who called for the development of "active inquirers" as our base. If we saw this as a major goal, much that exists—the workbooks and textbooks, the predetermined curriculum, the reductivism, the teaching to tests—would, I believe, begin to fade. We would be free to address the world, to make living in the world a larger part of the curriculum. I'm reminded of a story Maxine Greene tells of the black child who, in *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf*, found Toussaint, the black liberator of Haiti. But class wasn't about *Toussaint*—he wasn't part of the subject matter and, as it turned out in the end, neither was the girl.

Taking Spencer's formulation seriously is also to be more attent'ive to student's inclinations and what they value—*what they truly care about*. Not to give attention to student's intentions, Patricia Carini suggests, is "to rest content with the appearance of knowledge and forfeit all pretense of educating responsible thinkers, capable of forming opinions and taking actions." We can do better.

What is the source of our most deeply held understandings? That knowledge, those intellectual and social meanings, that are most internal? That are the most solid bases for our ongoing learning? It would do us all well to engage in such autobiographical reflection. We might be surprised about the sources of our personal knowledge. Such autobiography might even bring us some fresh entries to our teaching.

Alfred North Whitehead wrote a good deal about such personal ownership of knowledge, arguing that too little of it is fostered in the schools

because of their domination by "inert ideas," those small pieces of disconnected knowledge that *don't* serve as bridges to extended learning. An education that builds bridges, that makes fuller learning more possible, that expands a child or young person's potential for independence is, in today's terms, an "empowering education." That is, I believe, a goal worth striving for. It is also an education that is possible.

Another way to conceptualize continuities and bridges, keeping learning possibilities open, is to consider, as philosopher Mary Warnock does, that: "The cultivation of imagination . . . should be our chief aim in education."

Imagination is in essence a perspective, "a way of seeing connections and meanings beyond the routine and the commonplace." It demands a curriculum that truly challenges young people, that is laden with questions and multiple possibilities for entry, and for active learning. It suggests, as well, time to observe, sit, think, rework ideas, and the like.

To give consideration to imagination also calls upon us to think again about questions of certainty and uncertainty with regard to knowledge, the content of the classroom. Jay Featherstone suggests that the metaphor of Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi*, with the river always shifting, needing to be understood with a high degree of tentativeness, might be helpful. There is a virtue in keeping ideas alive, keeping their complexity fully in view.

In this regard, Tolstoi noted on the basis of his work with peasant children:

> *To the teacher, the simplest and most general appears the easiest, whereas for a pupil only the complex and the living appears easy—only that which demands interpretation and provokes thought is easy.*

He, like Featherstone in his understanding of Mark Twain's education, didn't view ambiguity and uncertainty as something to remedy, but as the soil for deep learning. We would do well to keep such a perspective in mind. The simple and the certain is not the road to social responsibility. And it doesn't fill out a basis for optimism, something we need more of as we approach the world.

There is a need for new understandings that the world, however defined, is not static, that change is possible, and that change demands a personal and collective investment. An education of consequence ought to encourage such understandings.

This morning on the radio I heard Vice President Quayle, in an interview, say that "it is dangerous to talk about disarmament. I do not see in my lifetime or my children's lifetime a time when we will not need nuclear arms." His remarks cause me to think about Anne O'Hare McCormick's remark on September 1, 1939, as the German army crossed the Polish border, that "all the things are happening that could never happen." Bringing her comment into the present and in a different circumstance, who would ever have imagined the changes in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe? There, "all the things are happening that could never happen." New possibilities indeed exist.

This is obviously enough. In thinking about schools in general, as well as our own schools, those in which we live much of our lives or to which we are most committed, we need always to reach back to guiding purposes, to our richest, most powerful, most generative conceptions of education and work towards them. Social responsibility rests there. And, of course, our task today and the days after today is to make living for social responsibility, being fully in the world, the central element of our work.

IS EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ANATHEMIC TO AMERICAN CULTURE?

(The answer should be no, but is it?)

Milton Kleg

The goal of developing what Martorella (1985) called competent, concerned, and reflective citizens has been and continues to be a primary goal of social education. At least, that is what we read in teacher journals, educational texts, and the resolutions of various educational organizations. The fact is that such goals seem to fail or be tossed aside when the majority of teachers begin their day's instruction.

Before we can expect teachers and educational institutions to effectively educate for social responsibility, a reflective encounter with American society, its teachers, and values is essential. What follows is an attempt to examine a few slices of American culture. While education for social responsibility may sound right, to a large extent it may fly in the face of—be anathemic to—American culture. The first slice will address implications for teachers. The second slice will suggest implications for laying the groundwork in developing a sense of social responsibility among students. The third slice considers the manifestation of ethnocentrism.

The First Slice: Real Values

The complexities of American culture are so vast and varied that we may have a civilization more akin to the ancient Persian Empire than to a Greek polis. Within such variety, paradoxes arise more often than not. Nevertheless, there does exist a set of beliefs and values which more or less are shared by the majority. Here are some examples. The United States is probably the most powerful nation in the world with the possible exception of the USSR. The per capita wealth and consumption rate of the United States is undisputedly the greatest among states.

In a nation of such vast wealth and power one can only assume that Americans are an intelligent and serious lot with the major portion of their time spent on learning, analyzing, and reflecting on political, economic, and social

conditions of their own state and that of the world. Of course, one might expect some entertainment, but no doubt most of the media focuses on news, education, and societal issues—hunger, education, drug abuse, war, terrorism, health, homelessness, etc.

This may seem a bit far-fetched to those in the know. If not, it should since it is all backwards from our current reality, but if the bomb that drops on me gets all of us, and if there are only bits and pieces left in the aftermath, then some historian or interplanetary archeologist may well create such a myth. The latest baseball scores, football bowl winners, and other recreational pastimes may be ignored or left uncovered. Even today, we cannot find Monday Night Football discussed in the history texts. Indeed, the great coliseums of Americana may be interpreted as places for speeches and political debates on the order of the Roman forum.

The point is that what people do with their time, and how they consume their wealth may be a greater reflection of their true values than those pronounced. America's greatest conative values—values inferred by behavior—seem to be gaining wealth and consuming it for escape attractions offered in society. A marriage between the desire for wealth and the escape attraction might partially explain the large drug trade and abuse scenario which in turn reflect a corollary value, exploitation.

With such salient values, how can any attempt to teach or educate for social reponsibility be taken seriously in such a society? Are teachers expected to be some sort of exception among the masses? Is their indoctrination or socialization any different than that of their fellow citizens? The average American teacher is neither born with nor socialized to have the attributes of a concerned, competent, and reflective citizen. While we must acknowledge the minority who have acquired such traits, we must also acknowledge the majority. This first slice of American culture or pax Americana suggests that education for social reponsibility runs counter to conative (behavioral) values while often supported by pronounced values. This is the same value conflict which was noted by Gunnar Myrdal in 1944.

> The "American Dilemma". . . is the ever-raging conflict between, on one hand, the valuations preserved on the general plane which we shall call the "American Creed," where the American thinks, talks, and acts under the influence of high national and Christian precepts, and, on the other hand, the valuations on specific planes of individual and group living, where personal and local interests; economic, social, and sexual jealousies; consideration of community prestige and conformity; group prejudice against particular persons or types of people; and all sorts of miscellaneous wants, impulses, and habits dominate his outlook.

It is conflict which can be partially resolved, but requires a reflection upon the part of the willing teacher to examine American culture without being overwhelmed by ethnocentrism and the facade of high technology. The Romans had a senate, a republic, and the games. They even had a horse appointed head of the senate. Americans have their coliseums, senators, and republic. The major

difference lies in the technology and degree of violence. Let no one say that bashed ribs and knee caps on the grid iron are as violent as a gladiator's sword, but it was usually the beast that got the blade in Rome (in more degenerate times).

For the teacher who wishes to sojourn into the realm of reality and to develop curriculum which will nurture and develop social responsibility in her or his charges, the first step is to seek a self-evaluation: Who am I as an individual, as a member of this society, and as a teacher? Such a teacher must indeed be special and dedicated to the concept of social responsibility, "to continue to be a student of subject matter and a student of mind activity" (Dewey, 1904) and to develop a sensitivity to the concept of "I am my brother's keeper" on an individual and global scale. This means what few teachers want to hear: teachers must have a regime of life which deviates from the norm of the fat and overindulged. Furthermore and even more frightening, it means that teachers must be role models in both private and public life.

The Second Slice: Meaningfulness

The second slice of American culture can be isolated from the latter only artificially. This slice examines aspects of meaningfulness. Does American society have meaning beyond the immediate and tangible? If so, what is this meaning? While there is no one answer to this question, teachers might consider becoming partners in learning with their students in an attempt to examine whether a core of meaningfulness can be defined and shared by Americans. The aforementioned questions may serve as a catalyst in initiating such an examination. From this examination and initial discussion, teachers and students in the second stage might identify the type of world which they seek and *why*. This should serve as a bridge to delineating problems which prevent such a world from being. The Langston Hughes (1941) poem "Let America Be America Again" can serve as a springboard in this matter. In this poem, Hughes strikes a sensitive cord with a direct bearing on the meaning of America in the following verse:

> *O' let America be America again—*
> *The land that never has been yet—*
> *And yet must be the land where every*
> *man is free. (p. 372)*

The third stage of learning brings teacher and student to the issues which must be examined if America and its pronounced values of justice, equality, and human rights and dignity are to be. Such issues include nuclear proliferation, hunger, human rights, genocide, homelessness, crime, and one of the most underexplored issues in social education, distributive justice.

Learning from this point should follow an inquiry approach with students learning in sub-groups, selecting topics, hypothesizing, researching the issue, and reporting and sharing findings with others. The essential grounding activity is that students must relate what they have learned to the question

which initiated the entire learning experience: What meaning does our world have and what should it be? In addition, students should be given the opportunity to relate all of this to the question of "Who and what am I to be?" This final question may very well provide a basis for action at personal and group levels as a member of a "world complex" (Beard, 1932, p. 97).

The Third Slice: Ethnocentrism

The final slice which has been selected for consideration is linked to both of the former but with a view to the global nature of humankind. A citizen with a strong sense of and commitment to social responsibility may be highly ethnocentric. In other words, one can be highly committed and at the same instant believe that her or his *weltanschauung* is the ony correct way by which all peoples should live. Many if not most Americans believe that the highest ideal and form of social and political control lies in democratic processes. Democratization is so ingrained in the American psyche that most critics find it unnecessary to respond to this issue. Yet, the case of McClosky versus Kahane illustrates this very notion and the paradoxes which are created by the inability to see the world from outside one's own cultural filters.

Former Congressman Paul N. McClosky and former Member of Parliament Rabbi Meir Kahane were engaged in a debate over the Arab-Israel conflict. McClosky argued the need for a separation of church and state in Israel as found in the United States. He stressed that Israel should be a secular democratic state. What he did not understand was that a Jewish state can only exist according to Jewish Law as found in the Torah and Talmud (note: There is a distinct difference between a Jewish state and a state dominated by Jews.) The entire concept of a state run according to the Torah was beyond McClosky's experience, while at the same time his own culture draws heavily upon a number of precepts found in the former (e.g., the Noahic Code, Ten Commandments, and messianic concepts which form the foundation of Christianity). Another confounding aspect of this case is the fact that the entire conception of a Jewish nation and Jewish state is in the same laws which McClosky, by his argument, must reject.

While the concept of democracy may work well in some societies and cultures, this does not grant a carte blanche to measure the remainder of the world by the same standard. Indeed, John Burton (1988) suggests that

> *Democracy in Western political philosophy is basically an institutionalized means of resistance to demands for human needs of distributive justice, identity, and recognition. In this way, it has scarcely advanced over the aristocratic systems it replaced. It took a long time for the United States leadership to recognize what was going on in the Philippines because it was a "democratic" and free-enterprise society. . . . It is Western democracies, Western-type so-called "free societies" especially in the underdeveloped world, not welfare or even socialist state systems, which present the major*

threat to the promotion of human needs and development, and major threat to peace. (pp. 27-28)

The degree to which Burton's remarks create irritability in teachers and students reflects the degree to which ingrained ethnocentric manifestations have been developed through the socialization process. The implication for educating for social responsibility is that teachers and students must do more than learn about ethnocentrism. They must be willing to identify it in a self-search and to expose and examine the hold it has on people—all people.

These three slices of American culture are merely that, slices of a very complex and massive culture. Americans do have an eleemosynary spirit as do members of other cultures. But this is not the issue. What demands exploration is the flip-side. If teachers and students are to become reflective, competent, and concerned citizens, if they are to develop a commitment of social responsibility, they must come to grips with their own values, develop a sense of meaningfulness, and work at developing a nonethnocentric perspective of the world which they share. And all of this might well begin with a reflection of whether social responsibility is anathemic to American culture. The answer might be yes. If it is, should it be? And if it should not be, what then?

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AN INCLUSIVE REALITY

Michael Hartoonian

A significant turning point in the history of Western civilization occurred in the 15th century. That point was a state of mind that turned our attention from the flat earth to a new conception of global commerce and conquest. In a sense, America was "discovered" and settled by Europeans because their mind-set about the earth was changing. Economic and political ideas such as mercantilism and imperialism made more sense, in fact were defined, within this global conception. One could argue that American history ended in 1492 and from that point on "American" history was, and is, an extension of European, African and Asian history that is global in its scope. Whether we talk about economics, military strategies, environmental issues, monitory concerns, national debt burdens, human rights or "Star War" weapons we are seeing an evolutionary process that started for us, at least, in the 15th century. While this global conception is a reality for us, it is the case that a national consciousness or identity is also a reality. A national consciousness allows us to simplify our lives. This simplification is realized through our collective creation of territoriality which serves as a screen which protects us from a world which is often hostile and complex. A territory (a sense of place) acts as a container for the spatial property of events. We may, in fact, be incapable of describing events in nonterritorial terms. Therefore, there are good reasons for clinging to the concept of territory, to the notion of being bounded—it simplifies reality, makes decisions easier to implement and offers a sense of security. And there is, as of yet, no substitute for the relatively new or modern concept of "state." However, our chances to learn and grow rest upon our ability to shift the way we view ourselves as well as our relationships to that which is outside our cultural frame of reference. The concept of national consciousness, then, represents an interesting learning dilemma within the realities of today's economic, social and political systems. On the one hand, it tends to blur individual dreams of a place for all within "a more perfect union" and, on the other hand, it brings some psychological control to a hodge-podge of

human needs and desires. In the historic sense of justice and security, national consciousness has been and still is a necessary condition.

It is important for us to consider the power of territoriality (and nationalism) in the human consciousness. From antiquity to the present, the concepts of place, roots, nationalism, territoriality, tribalism and chauvinism have been studied and practiced. In Plato's *Republic* a strong argument is made that even differences of innate qualities may be understood as rooted in place (the land of Greece). The men of gold, of silver and of bronze of which Plato spoke, were seen metaphorically, as alloys of the earth. And, these compounds were Greek, not barbarian.

Shakespeare is more clearly exclusive as he eloquently speaks of territoriality and nationalism (King Richard II, Act II):

> *This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle*
> *This earth of majesty, this seed of Mars,*
> *This other Eden, demi-paradise;*
> *This fortress built by nature for herself,*
> *Against infection and the hand of war;*
> *This happy breed of men, this little world;*
> *This precious stone set in the silver sea,*
> *Which serves it in the office of wall,*
> *Or as a moat defensive to a house*
> *Against the envy of less happier lands;*
> *This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this*
> *England.*

Perhaps, the exclusiveness of Shakespeare is shared by most people, because it is consistent with our conceptions of control and simplicity and with our inability to replace our affection of the flat map with an appreciation of the globe.

But today we are living in an inclusive reality. What is happening in the world is an immense networking of economic and military interdependence that is sustained, in large part, by playing one nation against another. While most states still hold to 15th and 16th century notions of exclusivity, economic and military systems treat the world as a 21st century global market and military theater. If a multinational business feels it can get a better deal from state X, it will simply trade with that state. If taxes or wages are too high in one place, the corporation can move to another. Labor is labor, be it Michigan or Malaysian. We have evolved to the point where it is appropriate to ask where loyalty to the state ends and loyalty to the multinational corporation begins. Thus, while many governments or nations continue to ride their ideological band wagons, knowledgeable bankers, merchants, industrialist and military leaders within nations have smilingly turned their attention to the globe.

An inclusive reality demands that states attend to the relationships that exist not only between and among them, but between and among individuals and groups (including economic, academic and artistic groups) who

happen to live in those states. The question here at issue is whether or not these relationships and networks can be structured within a mind-set that places emphasis upon cooperation. What this might suggest is a different view of the relationship between ethics and the state. But it is problematic as to whether or not the possibility exists for a state or a corporation to be ethical, for most would agree that ethical obligations can exist only between and among people. Further, these obligations cannot be shifted to another person; one cannot delegate a moral obligation.

In light of history, it is safe to argue that states (and corporations) seem to interact within an ethical vacuum. There is little international law (while the world court is a good beginning, litigation is voluntary) and nearly no global ethical system except where individuals link and apply pressure through working on common objectives such as the stewardship of the environment, human rights and peace. While these types of activities are important, they will never sufficiently saturate nor fill the global ethical vacuum. Thus, states and corporations must take some responsibility in the creation of a global ethical system, a more common reality of social principles.

What is called for is *not* the elimination of the state or corporation. That would be as absurd as suggesting that the way to have a moral world is to eliminate all the people. Rather, the need is for states to better understand their own self-interest. "Self-interest properly understood" means caring for the community in which we live. And that community is the globe. Our economic and military systems have made it so. Now we must bring our ethical and political systems into parity. If this balance of power between economic and military systems on the one hand, and ethical and political systems on the other is not achieved, then human survival is in jeopardy.

A simple principle must be raised by nation states, corporations and the individuals who live and work within them: the understanding that global stewardship or the care of the community is necessary if good business practices and political systems are to develop and endure. The word stewardship, as used here, derives its meaning from origins in Greek and early English. The Greek word *Oikonomos* means the manager of the house. The English word *ward*, or caretaker of the sty, comes from "one who cares for another's property." Both the Greek and Anglo-Saxon meanings incorporate the attributes of (1) an entrustment by the owner, (2) a responsible worker, and (3) a final accounting. The notions of accountability, worker or servant, and trust are fundamental to the concept of stewardship. And of what are we stewards? We, as educators and *Educators for Social Responsibilities*, are stewards of the cultural heritage, the ideas and ideals of high purpose that must find their way into the future. We are entrusted and accountable servants to our culture, to our contemporaries and to our children. This accountability, by the way, is a general obligation entrusted to all who call themselves "citizen."

The principle of stewardship is particularly relevant to the private enterprise system and representative democracy. Democratic organizations may be the most appropriate institutions to lead in the development of a global

ethical framework, because of their foundation in human rights, freedom and cooperation. In western history, the roots of representative democracy are found in such documents as the Magna Carta, the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Capitalism, also, rooted in Adam Smith's work, Wealth of Nations, argues for individual rights within an ethical system or just community. There may be arrogance in arguing from this perspective, but it is where we must begin, for democracy and capitalism not only provide freedom and power, but also obligations. Those individuals who cherish the values of life, justice, happiness and stewardship must insist that political and economic systems work to establish the just community and to establish that community through example.

An inclusive reality is at its best, then, a conscience. A conscience helps us to do justice and avoid evil. This always takes a great deal of moral courage, but moral courage can provide the seed bed for ethical political and economic policy, yielding a transformation of the concept of territory such that the notions of "nation" and "globe" will change from opposing ideas to an inclusive set that will provide the appropriate perspective for making ethical decisions within our human ecosystem.

UNDERSTANDING OUR INTERDEPENDENCE

CONFLICT RESOLUTIONLAND

A Round-Trip Tour

William J. Kreidler

You may have decided to visit here for any one of a number of reasons. It may be that your inspiration was your co-worker, the one who believes that screaming is the most constructive response to any dispute. Perhaps it was a trip to the video store with your nine-year-old. You wanted to rent *Holiday on Ice*. She wanted to rent *Surf Nazis Must Die*. Maybe it was the discussion you had with the guy whose car kept going after yours stopped. Perhaps it was your spouse's query about why exactly is it that you never, ever close closet doors. Whatever it was, you have arrived in Conflict Resolutionland.

This is the place people come to when they want to settle their differences. It's helpful to take the guided tour because Conflict Resolutionland has its own language, manners and customs, and even a population explosion. While some parts of it are very well mapped, there are still large sections that are virtually unexplored. It's a confusing place to start wandering around on your own. So there are also people there, like me, who are tour guides. Now, stay close together, and don't worry if you feel confused. So does your tour guide most of the time.

There are many roads into Conflict Resolutionland. Some people take the peace activist road. Some take the business management road. Some take the lawyer road, or the educator road, or the relationship road. People on every road have contributed significantly to our understanding of Conflict Resolutionland. If you start out by taking an attitude toward people who arrive via the Business Management road for example, you are going to miss out on some important insights. The characteristic that all the travelers have in common is an interest in conflict.

CONFLICT is a disagreement or misunderstanding between people. But that's not the important thing. In Conflict Resolutionland, conflict is a normal, natural, essential part of life. This is an important point. The reason for

this emphasis on attitude is that we so often learn as we grow up that conflict is bad and is to be avoided. By avoiding conflict we may avoid the potentially destructive results of conflict, but we also lose out on its potential for being used productively. In Conflict Resolutionland, conflict is never "good" or "bad." It is either FUNCTIONAL or DYSFUNCTIONAL. (Which means "good" or "bad.")

CONFLICT RESOLUTION is working out the conflict so that the disagreement is no longer seen as a problem. Conflict resolution is achieved when the disputants reach an agreement that they feel meets their needs and allows them to go forward with their lives. In Conflict Resolutionland the most sought-after type of resolution is called the WIN-WIN resolution.

To explain win-win resolution needs a short, scenic detour. The concept (though not the name) of win-win conflict resolution was first articulated by a Quincy, Massachusetts, woman named Mary Follet. Follet was a pioneer in the field now known as management. In her 1924 book *Creative Experience* she put forth the radical notion that people grew and changed by talking out differences to find out what each party really wanted. One of her favorite examples is now a Conflict Resolutionland classic: "The Window in the Library."

Two men were sitting in a library. One of the men got out of his seat, opened the window, and sat down again. A few minutes later the second man got out of his seat, closed the window, and sat down. The first man re-opened the window. "I want the window open!" he said. The second man closed the window with a bang. "I want it closed!" he said. The first man threw the window open. "Open!" The second man slammed it shut. "Closed!" The librarian rushed in to see what all the slamming and banging was about. "Why do you want it open?" she asked the first man. "I want fresh air," he replied. "But I feel a draft," said the second man. "Then move," said the first man. "I was here first," said the second. "Quiet, please!" said the librarian. "I know how to resolve this." And, strange as it may seem, she did not pick up the window pole and bop them both on the head. Instead she went into the adjoining room and opened a window there, thus allowing fresh air in without creating a draft. (In the Conflict Resolutionland Museum there is a room where robot versions of those two men eternally open and close the window. Unfortunately, you need to purchase tickets months in advance.)

That's a win-win resolution—where the needs of both or all the parties in a conflict are met. It's very different from the kind of conflict resolution most people are used to, where one person gets what he or she wants at the expense of the other disputant. In Conflict Resolutionland this is known as WIN-LOSE conflict resolution because it assumes that if one party wins, that is, gets what he or she wants in the conflict, that the other party must lose and not get what he or she wants. Some people get so involved in this that they are willing to lose if it will prevent the other party from winning. When neither party gets what they want it's called a LOSE-LOSE resolution. Any questions-questions?

It often surprises newcomers, but COMPROMISE comes as close to being a swear word as there is in Conflict Resolutionland. The only thing you could say that would be worse is "Ha, ha, I won!" That's because compromise is considered a lose-lose resolution. Neither party gets what they want/need, so they have both lost.

The problem is not with compromise per se, but rather with our tendency to rush to compromise before looking over other options. People will compromise before considering whether or not win-win resolutions are possible. In Conflict Resolutionland people say, "Why compromise when you can both have what you want?" (This is a good point, but let me say that I happen to hold compromise in higher regard than many people in Conflict Resolutionland. I am convinced that if you spend too much time in Conflict Resolutionland you can lose touch with how the world really works.)

One reason the librarian was so successful in finding a win-win solution is that she was able to distinguish between POSITIONS and INTERESTS. In a conflict situation, positions are what people say they want. Interests are why they want the particular position. The position of the one man in the library was the window should be open. His interest was in having fresh air. The second man's position was that the window should be closed. His interest was avoiding drafts. The librarian came up with a solution that was based on meeting the interests or needs of both men. One of the keys to success and happiness in Conflict Resolutionland is to avoid getting stuck on people's positions (what they say they want) and look instead for ways to meet their interests or needs. That is how you get to win-win resolutions.

While we're in the neighborhood of defining conflicts, you will notice on our tour that we will often look at the same thing from many different angles. Your mother was right, there are always two sides—at least—to any conflict situation. The better you understand the different PERSPECTIVES or POINTS OF VIEW in a conflict, the more likely you are to come up with a win-win resolution. This is also called PERSPECTIVE-TAKING. Many tourists neglect to pay much attention to perspective-taking, which is a pity, because few sights in Conflict Resolutionland are as important.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT is when one party in the dispute takes the initiative to resolve, or at the very least manage a conflict and make it less destructive. If the other parties get involved it may lead to conflict resolution. If they don't, the conflict manager is left to cope as best he or she can. Resolution or management, you use a lot of TECHINQUES in Conflict Resolutionland.

Techniques grow on trees here, partly because people in Conflict Resolutionland love to reduce life to a series of step-by-step instructions. Just do this, this, and then this, they say, and there you have it: win-win! One writer in Conflict Resolutionland went so far as to develop what he called—I swear I'm not making this up—"The Simple Seventeen Step Conflict Resolution Method."

Life is not that simple, of course. As you travel through Conflict Resolutionland, you will find many things that make the journey more difficult and more smooth. I call them COMPLICATING FACTORS and FACILITATING

FACTORS. Here are a few of each. (I leave it to you to decide in which category they belong.)

COMMUNICATION. With poor communication, conflicts grow. With good communication, people grow. An example of good communication: "Let's talk about it." Poor communication: "Good, now you know how I felt."

POWER. Some people have it and some don't. That in itself is enough to send you to Conflict Resolutionland. But there's more. Some people who have it use it inappropriately or even misuse it. Maybe not you, but some people. To make things even more complicated, power can shift from one person to another in a conflict, and back again. This keeps everyone on their toes.

EMPOWERMENT. When people acquire the skills and understandings they need to resolve their conflicts in ways that are productive, then they are, at least in part, empowered.

THE FOREST OF BAD FEELINGS. Ah, I see that many of you have visited here before. Some of you even have summer property. Lots of conflicts happen here, and it's a very tricky place to traverse. Be especially careful about falling into the swamp of ANGER which is somewhere in the middle. Once you get in slinging the slime in this swamp, it can be very hard to crawl out. (Some people have taken up residence in the swamp by saying they are learning how to express their anger. They're not expressing, they're leaking.)

Here we are at the Mall. This is where you find the -ATE words. This is a collection of a few of the more common ways to handle conflict: COMMUNICATE. CONCILIATE. NEGOTIATE. MEDIATE. ARBITRATE. LITIGATE. LEGISLATE. Please note that mediate is only one of several -ATE words. Some people forget that. Same with litigate. Remember, the point of visiting Conflict Resolutionland is to expand the number of choices you have, not limit them.

Even with greater choices, you will still encounter DIFFICULT PEOPLE. Difficult people really keep you on your conflict resolution toes. In fact, difficult people can force you to resort to your BATROM. (BATROM was adapted from an idea of Roger Fisher's and William Ury's. They are both big cheeses in Conflict Resolutionland. Their houses are over there on the left.)

BATROM stands for Best Alternative To Resolution Or Management. In other words, how you will cope with the situation when all else fails. It may mean you quit your job, or stop interacting with a particular person, or get divorced, or . . . you get the idea. BATROM's aren't anyone's idea of good solutions, but they are the best alternative when all else fails.

And it does fail sometimes. There are no GUARANTEES. People who offer guaranteed success in Conflict Resolutionland—and there are some—are lying. There are vast unexplored, unknown, and uncharted areas here. There is even VIOLENCE here, although people squirm at the very thought.

People in Conflict Resolutionland don't like violence and don't know what to do with it. But still it's here, demanding to be heard. It roams the back roads and the broad avenues, and it says boldly, "Go ahead and follow your steps and draw your charts and practice your skills. If you don't acknowledge me, if

you don't understand me. if you don't admit my appeal then you will never be rid of me."

Well, there are other spirits loose in Conflict Resolutionland too. There is, for example, PEACE. You find it here sometimes, hanging on the coattails of a win-win resolution, or drifting up from a particularly well-communicated feeling, or holding the hand of an understood perspective. It escorts you out of Conflict Resolutionland and back to the real world, feeling a little brighter and a little warmer. Just in time to watch *Surf Nazis Must Die*.

A NEW WAY OF FIGHTING

Resolving Conflict Creatively

Linda Lantieri and Tom Roderick

"Mom," said eight-year-old Wayne, "the fifth graders in my school are learning a new way of fighting."

"Oh? What do you mean?"

"Well, when kids get mad, they don't hit each other. Other kids help them talk out the fight instead."

Wayne was referring to the student mediation program being established in his school as part of the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program. Focusing on conflict resolution and intergroup relations, the Program began in 1985 with 20 teachers from three schools in Community School District 15. During the current school year, the Program will involve 800 teachers and more than 25,000 youngsters from 50 schools throughout New York City.

Why has the Program grown so rapidly? Why has it been effective? What lies ahead?

Rapid Growth

The Program has captured the imagination of teachers for two reasons: it helps them address issues of violence and prejudice with their students; and it works.

The world yearns for a "new way of fighting," one in which people are strong without being mean. Conflict is part of life. We wouldn't want to eliminate it even if we could. But we're urgently looking for ways to end the violence that causes so much unnecessary pain and suffering.

Young people are deeply affected by the climate of violence in which they are growing up. Asked to describe what they are experiencing, they speak of everything from television cartoons to hearing gunshots in the night from "crack" wars in their neighborhoods.

It's not surprising that homicide is now the second leading cause of death for people ages 15-24. For youngsters are being bombarded by the message that violence is an acceptable way of dealing with conflict. In fact, it's often

presented as the *hero's* choice. "They say that we're the future," observes 11-year-old Jessica, a student mediator at P.S. 261 in Brooklyn, "but they treat us like we're nothing. On TV it's sex, drugs and violence—they're projecting that to kids. Practically all of the cartoons have something to do with guns or destroying something."

We need to give the young a very different message. We need to show them that the Rambos of this world, far from being heroes, are pathetic because they can think of only one response to all problems. We need to show them that the highest form of heroism is the passionate search for creative, nonviolent solutions.

That's what the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program is all about. We show young people that they have many choices besides passivity or aggression for dealing with conflict. But we go far beyond telling them to "just say no" to violence. The core of our work is helping them develop the knowledge and skills to make nonviolent choices real in their own lives.

As concern about violence has risen, teachers and administrators have been drawn to the RCCP. And they stick with it because it works. From the beginning of the Program, teachers have reported positive changes in their students and in themselves. Those positive results were confirmed in a formal evaluation conducted by Metis Associates, an independent evaluator. The Metis report, published in November, 1988, assessed the impact of the Program during the 1987-88 school year. (A report on Metis' evaluation of the Program during the 1988-89 school year will soon be available.)

The 1988 Metis report concluded that the Program has had "an observable and quantifiable positive impact on students, participating staff, and classroom climate." The data showed that teachers were committing substantial amounts of time to implementing the curriculum in their classrooms. Teachers reported that they devoted an average of seven periods per month to specific lessons in conflict resolution. Ninety-six percent said that they were also infusing conflict resolution concepts into other aspects of the curriculum.

Eighty-seven percent of teachers reported that they had noticed positive changes in their students' attitudes or behaviors as a result of their participation in the Program. Teachers indicated that there was less physical violence in their classrooms, decreased use of verbal put-downs in favor of more supportive comments, spontaneous student use of conflict resolution skills, and increases in self-esteem, leadership skills, and initiative. They also noted more caring behavior between children, more widespread acceptance of differences, and increased skill in understanding alternative points of view. In a typical comment, one teacher said: "[The Program] has taught them that there are other ways to resolve their conflicts besides fighting and being nasty. It has showed them how to cooperate, what friendship really means, and the value of working together as a group to achieve common goals."

Teachers also noted changes in their own listening skills and teaching methods, increased understanding of children, increased use of specific conflict resolution techniques in both classroom and personal lives, more

positive attitudes about conflict and conflict resolution, and increased self-esteem. Eighty-six percent of responding teachers indicated that they had noticed changes in their own attitudes or behavior as a result of their participation in the Program. As one teacher put it: "I have come to realize that even young children can observe behaviors of conflict and aggression and be able to suggest ways of resolving conflict with a sense of fairness."

Ingredients for Success

Several factors contribute to the Program's effectiveness. It has been developed by teachers. The training is thorough, and teachers receive much follow-up support. And participation is voluntary.

Developed by teachers: Teachers and principals have been integrally involved from the beginning in creating the curriculum and the overall design of the Program. Expansion into additional districts began in the fall of 1988 only after three-and-a-half years of careful development in District 15. Now as we work to create curricula in conflict resolution and intergroup relations for District 75 (Citywide, Special Education) and the Alternative High School Program, we are using the same approach. With help from teachers, we are writing draft curricula, which will be revised on the basis of teachers' classroom experiences.

Training and follow-up: Teaching conflict resolution and intergroup understanding to young people is rewarding, but not easy. Teachers appreciate the support they get from the Program to undertake the challenge. The core components of the Program include 20-hour introductory training courses for teachers, regular classroom instruction based on a 300-page curriculum, and classroom visits by expert consultants (10 visits per teacher). Asked as part of the Metis evaluation to identify the single component they found most important, most teachers selected the classroom visits by the consultants. Said one teacher: "They were like a life-line for me."

Voluntary participation: Districts are involved because the superintendent, the local school board, parents, teachers, and administrators want the Program and ask to be a part of it. Teachers join the Program at their own volition. In each District we begin with a few schools, and the Program develops organically from there.

Unique Collaboration

The RCCP is the result of a highly successful collaboration between the New York City Board of Education/Office of Health, Physical Education and School Sports, Educators for Social Responsibility Metropolitan Area (ESR Metro), and participating community school districts. The Office of Health, Physical Education and School Sports has initiated, developed and disseminated many innovative programs that address societal needs, such as New York City's acclaimed Family Living Including Sex Education Program and AIDS Education. ESR Metro is a community-based organization with expertise in teaching conflict

resolution skills to young people. Although the financial commitment of the New York City Central Board of Education and the community school districts has steadily increased, the quality of the Program continues to depend on substantial private funding, which ESR Metro raises.

What Lies Ahead?

The demand for training in conflict resolution and intergroup relations is increasing dramatically. Teachers, principals, and superintendents, not only in New York City but in other parts of the country, are looking to the RCCP because of its proven track record. We are thrilled by this development, and are actively looking for ways to respond.

Some cautionary words are in order, however. Sometimes when people get excited about a new idea, they tend to see it as a panacea. We see signs that that is happening with conflict resolution. We must resist that temptation. Learning conflict resolution skills is only one way to address the epidemic of violence in our society. Violence has many sources, among them drugs and poverty. Conflict resolution can help but will be most effective as part of a larger strategy.

Nor is conflict resolution a quick fix. From almost five years of work with the RCCP, we've learned that it takes time for adults to integrate conflict resolution concepts into their own lives; it takes time for them to learn how to translate those concepts into the classroom; and it takes time for even the most effective classroom instruction to have a significant impact. Some of the most effective teachers in the RCCP have observed that it sometimes takes months for youngsters to begin integrating the concepts and skills in such a way that their behavior begins to change.

Success requires a substantial commitment of our best energies over time. And one thing is certain. The RCCP can't and won't be doing this work alone. We owe a great debt to people whose work in the field has inspired and guided us. Some of our mentors have been Priscilla Prutzman of the Children's Creative Response to Conflict Program, William Kreidler of Boston ESR, Ellen Raider of Teacher's College, Pamela Moore of Project SMART, Gail Sadala, formerly of the Community Board Center for Policy and Training in San Francisco, and Roger Fisher of the Harvard Negotiation Project. We look forward to joining with these people and others in a coordinated effort to serve the children of our troubled city.

Conflict resolution is not a grab-bag of gimmicks or recipes. As one of our teachers put it: "The [Resolving Conflict Creatively] Program is more than a curriculum, it's a way of life." Mahatma Gandhi called his autobiography *Experiments in Nonviolence*. At our best, we approach our work in conflict resolution in that spirit, as an open-minded search for truth. The field is not so much a set of answers as a philosophy of life that sees conflict, well handled, as a path to truth, and is continually looking for new and better ways. We urge you to join us in this search and to help us create a world that is worthy of our young people.

REFLECTIONS ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AS AN EMPOWERING PROCESS FOR STUDENTS . . . AND FOR ME

Joan May T. Cordova

The police car coasted through the apartment complex on Meadowview Road, interrupting the crack dealers. While the innocent stared, a young boy ran ahead and yelled a warning. Porch lights came on simultaneously, signaling others. "What kind of a chance does that kid have?" asked Sgt. Don Parnsworth, who remembers many others who have taken the same path.

. . . people who live in Meadowview have been trying to save a neighborhood teetering on destruction. An enclave of hard-working families and retirees is surrounded by the violence and personal devastation of the crack market, youth gangs, unemployment and broken families.

—"Amid Gangs and Fear, Neighbors Fight for Hope." *Sacramento Bee*, May 15, 1988, sec. 1, p. A1.

Too often, the voices of young people in communities like Meadowview go unheard. Many people—especially those outside of the community—will cite a neighborhood's poverty, crime, drugs, and gangs to justify the low expectations they have of students here. A cycle of low expectations and low achievement may continue to silence youth.

Yet at Meadowview's Freeport Elementary School, a Conflict Management Program begins to break a negative cycle by empowering a group of students whose voices are being heard. Student conflict managers help others resolve playground and classroom disputes. Some demonstrate new communication and problem-solving skills at teacher-training workshops and presentations. Others write to state legislators in support of conflict management programs. Working as a team, students determine guidelines for their own work and for teacher intervention in the conflict management process. Students are speaking up. Listen. . .

Conflict Manager's Rap

Listen everybody while I rock the mike
about conflict management
—better get it right.
We help many people
in different ways.
You better get off us—
Just change your ways!
(WORD!)

Don't be a fool.
Just stay in school, because
Conflict managers like to keep their cool.
We don't have to fight
to get our rights.
And that to me is a very good delight.

Let me tell you something about conflict managers.
We are chosen
and we are sent
to help the school
and use our tools.

We don't like violence on TV.
If you want to know about peace, just ask me.
If there was peace in the world,
people won't be stealing from each other.
Just make peace with each other.
PEACE!

Poetry by Ruben Allen, David Doyle, Larry McNally (5th grade) & Derrick Doyle & Destin Savage (6th grade); 1st place entry (special group category) in the Global Understanding Awards sponsored by Sacramento chapter, ESR.

With the support and leadership of Oscar Satow, principal from 1983-1988, Freeport School challenged expectations many held of students in a "high risk" neighborhood. Dedicated teachers, many of whom had chosen Freeport over other schools, provided high quality instruction while continuing to develop even more effective ways to meet the diverse needs of their students. Test scores rose. Administrators and staff members from other schools often observed Freeport's programs. In this setting, sixth grade teacher Winnie Bender and I chose to implement a Conflict Management Program which would enable student conflict managers to resolve playground and classroom disputes through problem solving and negotiation. Our rationale for assuming responsibility for coordinating the entire program is best expressed by a student conflict manager: "I want to make the school a peaceful place where students don't have to be afraid of getting hurt in fights."

The thoughts which follow provide a chronological sketch of the process of implementing the Conflict Management Program. By reflecting on my journal notes from the program's first year, I hope to identify strengths of the process which contributed to the empowerment of students and to make suggestions for the program's improvement and expansion. While our experience is not intended to be a "model" program, it is an example of teaching/learning made meaningful when students are motivated by knowing that their actions "make a difference."

Beginning the Conflict Management Program

Spring, 1987
My principal, a co-teacher and I attended a 3-day conflict management training workshop presented by Community Board Center for Policy and Training. A significant factor here is that the principal provided support and shared the vision for implementing this program. My co-teacher and I both chose to coordinate the program for Freeport and begin outlining our plans.

Summer, 1987
My co-teacher and I meet to plan student and teacher training workshops, create an implementation timeline, tentative schedule for student training, clarify individual roles. I doubt that we would have been able to begin the program early in the year without this summer meeting.

Fall, 1987
Now reflecting on how much we needed the entire staff's support throughout the school year, I realize how crucial it was for the principal to interpret CM as a schoolwide program (and not just the project of one or two teachers). All teachers need to be exposed to CM training workshops (which we conducted) as well as to the schoolwide curriculum on listening/communication/problem solving.

In regard to the selection of conflict managers, the team was enriched by the diversity of the group. Not just "top students" were chosen to be conflict managers. Too, there was a necessary balance between allowing students to vote for conflict managers while allowing classroom teachers to "have the last word" in the selection process. Some 40+ students were elected.

Training Student Conflict Managers

Although training manuals recommended that student meetings as well as conflict management training be held during school hours, the lack of money for substitutes or special aides posed a special dilemma of when to schedule student training. We decided to hold all conflict management meetings and training sessions after school. Not only did this test students' commitment to the program, it tested ours, as teachers who had to make sacrifices in already too-busy days. For as coordinators, our roles included planning and evaluating each training session, preparing charts and materials, communicating with parents

and staff, and scheduling student conflict managers for duty. That all of this his took place after school sent a message of giving and of service to students who realized that the program was "important enough to stay after school for." (And I learned that they enjoyed staying after school and valued the time we spent with them, with some even wanting more.) We also pointed out that as conflict managers they would be giving up their recesses perhaps once a week to help other people. We all felt good about giving. But by the last of the one-and-a-half-hour training sessions (seven in two weeks), everyone admitted to being drained by the demands of the program.

> *8 October 1987*
> *Conflict Management training is off to a good start. . .*
>
> *16 October 1987*
> *CM workshops are exciting—the insightful perceptions of young people, their serious questions, visible growth, their empowerment through their grasp of new skills. And as they grow, so do I. I learn—over and over—the lessons from my own training sessions.*
>
> *. . . I am touched by the possibilities of networks—of people coming together with common concerns and values. . . of wanting to care for our world. Realizing that idealism hasn't died, but that there is so much more to learn—survival skills, learning about living, how to deal with pain, how to negotiate with many types of people. Learning now about how much we need to restore balance in our lives and lifestyle. . .*
>
> *Read* An Outbreak of Peace *. . . am touched by its message of hope for individuals transformed, empowered, and inspired . . . young people's idealism . . . for communities coming together in support . . . of choosing positive values. It affirms all that I believe in.*

Strengths of the Training Process

Students learned not only the conflict management process, but they learned prerequisite skills of reflective listening, communicating (i.e., "I" statements), and problem-solving through experiential activities and through the repeated modeling of processes. Students also explored various ways of responding to conflict and the consequences of each. For some, problem-solving and negotiation were new options.

During training, students created their own role-playing scenarios of possible playground or classroom conflicts. Conflict managers tested new mediation skills through often dramatic simulations of conflicts involving name-calling, pushing in line, gossip, lost or stolen items, and more.

After each role-playing session, participants were encouraged to express the positive aspects of each process, and to reflect on consequences of their decisions and actions. Teachers and all students brainstormed together different problem-solving strategies and "what if?" scenarios. Resolving their

own conflicts, students often demonstrated deeper insights and more effective problem-solving strategies than teachers.

It was important to have other teachers involved in the training sessions—to learn about the process as well as to work with small groups of students. And for the teacher/coordinators it was important for us to evaluate each session and revise the format or content of the next session.

> *24 October*
> *Successful conflict managers' training, cheering kids—a group hug with staff—we are happy. I am awed by not just the success, but by the possibilities, the power and skills acquired by students—taking charge of their problems, their lives . . . making "I" statements—communicating their needs . . . making decisions, analyzing, showing insight and survival skills. So much need around us but here's one positive response.*

Suggestions for Improving/Expanding the CM Training Process

- Involve "veteran" conflict managers in assisting with the training process.
- Begin with a session for "training trainers." Practice/model skills of questioning, processing, making positive statements, encouraging others to reflect on processes, working with small groups. Involve new teachers, interested parents, and veteran conflict managers in this process. Clarify all roles.
- Work at keeping a more consistent pace in all training sessions to avoid some days feeling much "heavier" than others.
- Consider having themes for each training session (cooperation, listening, communicating, problem-solving strategies, what is a conflict manager) that are carried through.
- Begin dialogue journals. Set aside journal writing/doodling time with teachers/coordinators writing and sharing questions and thoughts, too.
- Evaluate each training session with entire group. (Use simple strategies from resource books.)
- Add to curriculum—activities on "WIN-WIN" situations.
- Involve students in tasks for preparing training area—tacking up agenda, posters, charts, etc.
- More community building activities and cooperative games.

> *28 October*
> *Conflict Management assembly was a success—kids in high spirits all wanting photos taken with their "graduation" diplomas. They felt proud . . . worked hard. The program has already been successful if only for this.*

Ongoing (Weekly) Conflict Management Meeting

The CM team decided to meet one day after school each week. As a meeting facilitator during the first year, I had no precedent to follow. But not always knowing what to do opened up new possibilities. Reflecting on these times now, it seems that as a teacher I struggled with balancing many creative tensions in the dynamics of CM meetings. I tried to find time for/to:

- reflecting on the CM process—doing things
- having structure and meeting plans—allowing issues to emerge and addressing each in time
- stretch and sometimes direct students' thinking—let students share their own idea. views
- address specific CM issues students experienced on the playground or in class —focus away from/beyond the immediate situation to think about CM in broader contexts.

Although I often slipped in balancing these tensions. the meetings provided opportunities for building community. for reflecting on experiences together. for making new plans. and for relating new understandings of conflict management to experiences in the classroom and on the playground.

> *12 November*
> *Once again. through struggling with the kids. they give me back more than I seem to give them. As much as they pay for my mistakes. they still give. Two weeks of the CM process in place. All have new insights. questions. concerns. suggestions. They bring new seriousness to these tasks. a serious side I've seldom seen of them. They are doing more than helping others solve their own problems. Though unaware of the fact. they are developing skills of lifelong value; listening. mediating. expressing feelings. developing strategies with which to solve problems. broadening the range of options with which to approach conflict. They are learning to value cooperation (to work cooperatively) and interdependence (depending on each other in their teams).*
>
> *They know how it feels to be privileged. special. They expressed some of their positive feelings about what being a conflict manager meant— recognition. popularity. privilege. helping . . . (Am touched that some realize what a teacher must do.) Some expressed that what's best about being a conflict manager is "staying after school. knowing that teachers care to try to keep you on the team. teachers willing to work after school. . ."*
>
> *Process is empowering—for all—it's helping to provide students with opportunities to make choices about their lives.*

Strengths of the Weekly Meeting Process

One strength of this process is that all are choosing to give time to the CM program after school. We share feelings about how hard it is to do this at times. But we also talk about how what we're doing in the CM program is important. Together. we brainstorm agenda items for each meeting. Meetings become times to express feedback we're getting about the program. We share compliments as well as concerns. It's a time for building community—sharing treats. playing games. planning new activities. and learning new skills.

Facilitators/teachers try to also model the use of positive statements and new vocabulary. Students are encouraged to express their concerns. their

new ideas, as well as issues with which they may be struggling. Together, they brainstorm strategies for addressing each concern or issue. ("I'm not getting enough time on duty." "Other kids try to bother us when we're on duty." "Teachers don't understand what to do when we're taking care of problems." "What are consequences for conflict managers who . . . ?" "What do you do when disputants do this . . . ?" Or when they . . . ?") While sharing their different responses, we realize how there are often no "right answers" or "easy answers" to specific situations. Sometimes students share ideas on "what else we can do" together.

> *13 January 1988*
> *Something special happened in conflict management today . . . empowerment —new skills, confidence, building on experience. . . sharing a vision of this place as a better place . . . giving . . . a cooperative process . . . collaboration . . . allowing young people to take responsibility, initiative; to plan; to set guidelines . . . expressed their needs, feelings—struck by their sense of having been empowered. Now they want to share the process with others—new CMs they volunteered to train, other schools, be on the agenda of a teachers' meeting, plan an assembly, be in a videotape.*
>
> *They challenge me to find new ways, new options into which they may channel their energy. No longer will I modify my language for them . . . opting instead to allow them to ask me for clarifications or definitions of words/phrases/ideas which may be new. Am nearly ready to relinquish the task of writing the newsletter for them, preferring that they write their own.*

Suggestions for Improving/Expanding the Ongoing Meeting Process

- Group may design a format (a meeting schedule) which would include time for taking care of CM team "business" (specific concerns, logistics, etc.) as well as time for other activities.
- Build into the schedule time for envisioning "what else we might do as conflict managers."
- Use more team building activities in large group and small group settings. Build in cooperative learning/problem-solving activities for actual CM teams (groups of 3) which will vary weekly or monthly.
- Discuss roles and skills needed by group facilitators. Let students facilitate some meetings. (I need to be careful not to set this up as a goal or end in itself. For students still need to be able to speak up as members of the CM team and not just facilitate. We'll see.)
- Be ready to present curriculum plans with the goal of relating themes of conflict management to other contexts. This may be one of the ideas I share when we brainstorm "other things to do."
- Group needs to brainstorm a school-year timeline that includes special "fun activities" (last year we went skating, had pizza, played volleyball) to which we can all look forward.

- Discuss and act on how we might continue to share the CM process with others (the PTA, other schools, teachers, groups).
- Dialogue to replace debate!
- Go into more depth with negotiation strategies.
- Continue to encourage/enable students to express visions for their work, their year as conflict managers.

> *13 January, 1988 (continued)*
> *Learnings here will inform my career/future directions I take in education. Students want to be involved. They have insight, information, and seriousness in regard to issues which affect them directly. They want responsibility . . . have ideas to share . . . Need/want to give, to be of service. They value shared decision-making.*
>
> *I sense the bonding that is taking place. The empowering skills will last a lifetime: listening, "I" statements, problem solving, giving. . .*
>
> *They've carried this to a new level—outlining "guidelines for teacher intervention" and wanting to discuss this with the staff.*
>
> *Want now to stretch for them—the ideas of giving and service . . . and broaden the definition of conflict management for them. In what other areas—beyond the playground—will issues of CM arise? Home . . . workplaces . . . world . . . and in sharing these, broaden their world and knowledge of the world with them.*
>
> *What was exciting today is that students demonstrated skills—problem-solving and communication—in a new context—in relation to teachers. What next? The superintendent? The governor? The President, perhaps?*
>
> *From a December letter I sent to students/parents/staff:*
> *Freeport's conflict management program would not be successful without the support all of you give to the program. We've all learned about giving—time, recess, energy, patience; together we've worked cooperatively to find peaceful resolutions to conflict. Now we hope that the spirit of giving and of peace will be part of our holiday season. . . and of our world.*

Taking the Conflict Management Process Beyond Our School Site

Other schools/groups wanted us to lead teacher training workshops/presentations. Students volunteered to accompany us. They demonstrated the CM process, fielded questions, shared what they'd learned. Later, during our after-school meetings they shared their experiences with the rest of the team.

In March, 1988, the CM team learned that Assemblyman John Vasconcellos had authored AB #4444 which would "require the governing board of each school district . . . to develop and implement a conflict management and peer counseling program."

"Let's write letters," the team suggested. They did, and eventually received a response from the Assemblyman.

A reporter from the *Sacramento Bee* attended one of the meetings after school.

Students seemed to have more to express than the reporter wanted to hear. Still, all were proud when the article was published.

Sacramento's local ESR chapter noticed the article, wrote a note commending Freeport's CM team, and invited students to participate in their Global Understanding Awards competition for essays/poetry/art/music. Some members of the CM team worked on individual entries while one group of students responded: "We've been working together in teams all year. We don't want to compete against each other. We're going to write a rap together." Previously exposed to process writing techniques, students wrote various stanzas: one read the work aloud, another edited, one provided the "beat" (by bee-boxin'). They submitted both a written copy and audio tape of their rap which eventually won a first place poetry award in a special group category.

At the Global Understanding Awards celebration, Freeport students weren't sure about whether they'd be performing their rap. One of their key group members had to suddenly be hospitalized for an appendectomy. They had to make last minute changes in their roles. "We can't do our rap here without Derrick." "It's up to the rest of you to decide," I told them. Then while on stage to receive their award, the ESR presentor commented, "It's too bad that everyone here didn't get a chance to hear your tape." "We'll do the rap for you now." Without waiting for an answer, they rapped and bee-boxed, their soulful rhythms and poetry a contrast to the choir-like "Peace Child" singers. At our regular CM meeting the next week, the sinners told the others, "Those people acted like we were famous or something. They've never even heard bee-boxin' before. They thought we were great."

> *15 May 1988*
>
> *Today an article describes Meadowview's gangs, drugs . . . but hope amidst all. Reflecting on all that this year at Freeport has been, I'm struck by how—despite the struggles arising out of troubled homes/drugs/gangs in the community and all the negative PR—there are some promising youth, bearing hope.*
>
> *Yesterday's global understanding awards recognized the growth in the understandings many have of what it means to resolve conflict, and what it means to live in a peaceful/just world. So much hope here. That Freeport students won a 1st place group award affirms not only the value of the program but the need for other experiences that are empowering, and that will stretch them to see beyond the Meadowview community.*

At one point I thought that the CM presentations to other teachers and groups, letters to a state legislator, and the Global Understanding Awards had taken the students as far as they could go in one year. Instead, they began to grapple with difficult questions about what conflict management meant in response to the challenges of their neighborhood, the Meadowview community. I lingered I remember how other youth outside the classroom when CM meetings were being held. "Gang busters! Ya'll are gang busters in there!" They tried to

disrupt meetings at times. During this season a representative from the city police department's "gang suppression unit" presented a video on gangs to the school staff which seemed to only terrorize teachers who were already fearful. Such experiences made me realize the risks that all of us—the entire CM team—had taken to make the school a more peaceful place.

> *15 May*
> *Identifying now what left me feeling helpless after the police's presentation on gangs (to the school staff). I have so many questions. How do we, whose task it is to teach these students, respond to choices to take part in gang activity? How do we counter attitudes that may be supported by parents? Is it even our role to discuss these issues with students? On a gut level, I feel it's so, it's necessary. We must. Now after this event, I'm certain that it is our responsibility to provide the tools to enable students to make positive choices towards caring/working towards a more just world.*

Although at this point I felt/knew that we should discuss these issues with students, I didn't quite know how. I knew that it was important for students to share their ideas and feelings, but I wasn't prepared for the emotional intensity of the discussion and my own lack of knowledge of approaches to a loaded issue. I remember "winging it" at the end of a heated debate. Not wanting either side to "win," I tried to summarize all points raised by each side, trying to create a larger picture. I needed help!

> *4 June 1988*
> *Another message from the conflict managers. Because they struggled with the dilemma of knowing they "should not fight," they shared concerns about situations when one had to fight. We had a formally structured debate. I helped the younger ones describe why they chose not to fight. Once again, insightful, gutsy comments from both sides:*
>
> *"Sometimes—for self defense—you have to fight. Once someone broke into our house and took everything. People will beat up on you if you don't fight."*
>
> *"We don't fight because we want a peaceful world. . . We don't want fights to get more and more serious for people to be injured."*
>
> *"But that's why people fight. They're fighting for peace and justice. They can't get what they want so that's why they're in gangs—to get what they want."*
>
> *Students all truly wanted to get involved in this debate. So rare are the opportunities when we hear their perspectives, their own words. Important for young people to be able to name these experiences.*

Still, although the conflict management process had made progress in one year, I realized how much I still needed to learn before I could improve and expand

the program. This led me to participate in ESR's seminar, "Teaching For Social Responsibility," at the University of Lowell, Massachusetts, last July, 1988.

Positive Results for the School

Whenever conflicts arose on the playground or in the classroom, disputants had the option of allowing teachers to attend to the conflict or of solving their own problems with the assistance of student conflict managers. Trained in active listening, communication, and problem-solving skills, conflict managers would enable disputants to find their own resolutions to conflicts. Most of the time this freed playground and classroom teachers from having to respond to minor conflicts. Although conflict managers were instructed to call on teachers during actual physical disputes, conflict managers often hoped to intervene in playground disputes before conflicts escalated.

The visibility and actions of Freeport's conflict managers conveyed a powerful message to all students: problem-solving is one way to deal with conflict. There is an alternative to fighting.

Students' Reflections on the Experience of Being a Conflict Manager

The success of the Confict Management Program might best be assessed through the words of students themselves. After their initial training program, students expressed the following positive aspects of being conflict managers: "You learn how to deal with people's problems." "Teachers are proud of us." "You experience how teachers have to solve things." "Teachers take time after school to help us learn." "You can tell others about conflict management and what you did today." "Teachers care to keep you on the team.".

In time, student conflict managers began to relate new learnings to their personal experiences: "It helps me think about how I solve my own conflicts." For some students, the experience of being a conflict manager changed their behavior: "I know I've changed. I used to get into a lot of fights, but since I've been a conflict manager I've stopped being that way."

The process of reflecting together on our experiences through a democratic process enabled some to gain the confidence to speak out for the first time. After reading the book *Ferdinand*, about a bull that chose not to fight, all students shared new insights on how they personally related to the themes of the story. "This reminds me of those kids on the playground—all that kicking, snorting, butting their heads together just to show how strong they are." "Ferdinand reminds me of me. When the other kids are fighting and picking on me I have to walk away. I don't fight." All seemed to feel that there was a little bit of the peaceful Ferdinand in them. One student spoke for many by saying, "We help the school solve these problems, stop these fights. . . If it weren't for us, there would have been a war here." Student conflict managers did make a difference at Freeport School. Their voices were heard, their contribution valued.

Working with Conflict Managers—An Empowering Process for Me

Many of a resource teacher's "traditional" responsibilities focus on compliance and documentation of services to students who have special needs. Resource teachers accept referrals (from other teachers and/or teams of specialists), diagnose, teach, test, evaluate results, complete reports, share results at still more meetings, and begin the cycle again. This often happens with groups of students who also happen to be diagnosed "behavioral problems." In Sacramento (SCUSD), resource teachers also conduct state program reviews, write school program plans, and coordinate other programs, such as ESL and computer programs; some are responsible for budgets, supervising and training aides, and more.

Amidst all this, at times I often struggle with just "staying on top of" all the work while at the same time wanting to be creative, to try new ideas. It's hard. Sometimes I feel/have felt that there's no room for "idealistic visions of what education should be."

Since I've been teaching professionally, I've had to continually identify which activities and teacher expectations (yes, those determined by the district, et al.) are beneficial or detrimental to students. In time I began to regard tedious tasks with less seriousness (e.g., toss out worksheets/workbooks, rely less on test results, and simplify paperwork).

That I chose to work with conflict managers in my "spare time" after school created tremendous freedom—from tests, prescribed curriculum, others' expectations, compliance guidelines. That the program was successful suggests many new possibilities for how and why we teach and learn. The experience affirmed (and proclaimed to the public which is not always aware) that students in a community like Meadowview *can* achieve, can be models, and do have much to say and give. Through the process I learned to once again value the process of education. I learned/am learning/am still exploring how students and teachers might be empowered through education. Working with the Conflict Management Program was empowering for me not only because of all that I've learned/am learning, but because the experience nurtures hope.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION: A SYSTEMWIDE COMMITMENT

Nancy Schniedewind, Bonne Sue Adams, Winifred Evers Pardo

Since the early 1980's, the Shoreham-Wading River School District on Long Island has been involved in staff development in the area of education for human rights. A suburban, predominantly white middle class district with 2,100 students, it supported by 1989 a full-blown, ongoing program which is not common to most schools or public school districts.

A homogeneous community such as this is often tempted to ignore issues of stereotyping and discrimination while they remain beneath the surface. In Shoreham-Wading River the Title IX Committee took the initiative and recommended that the district administration establish a curriculum committee to plan for human rights education. Subsequently, a continuing program of staff and curriculum development has raised awareness among teachers, students, support staff and administrators about issues of stereotyping and discrimination.

The approach is not to treat as separate and distinct the areas of sex discrimination, racial prejudice, bias against the disabled, class discrimination, homophobia, and ageism. Instead, the approach is comprehensive. The broad area of human rights education speaks to all forms of stereotyping and discrimination. Similarly, this program in white suburbia has applicability for widely diverse populations and districts.

The human rights program addresses both the content of human rights and the processes involved. Ideas and knowledge are central to educating in the field of human rights. No less important are the processes of human interaction. Respectful human relationships, modeled in training, are the skills needed by both staff and students in the broader school community.

Origins of the Human Rights Education Program

It was the Title IX district self-study, complete in July, 1976, which proved to be the forerunner of the present human rights effort. Title IX legislation prohibits discrimination based on sex in educational institutions receiving federal funds. It was early recognized that, in addition to the legal dimensions of the Title IX legislation, there was a need for education concerning attitudes and behaviors which historically had created the climate in which stereotyping and discrimination flourished. Attitudes and curricular issues are not addressed directly by Title IX, although they were at times discussed in the district's standing Title IX Committee. At the urging of the Title IX coordinator and the Title IX Committee, the school district administration formed a separate curriculum committee to deal with educational issues of sex stereotyping. This committee was one of a number of districtwide curriculum committees composed of both teachers and administrators.

By 1982 the Title IX Committee and its companion curriculum committee recognized the need to broaden the curriculum committee's educational focus. If all components of the school community were to be made aware of issues of stereotyping and discrimination and if all individuals and groups were to be assured educational equity, a broad approach was necessary. Subsequently, the curriculum committee became the Human Rights Curriculum Committee, under the leadership of Dr. Bonne Sue Adams, Middle School Assistant Principal, and Winifred Pardo, Middle School Administrative Assistant and now Title IX coordinator for the district. As expressed by its members and approved by the district's administrative Council, the Human Rights Curriculum Committee ". . . seeks to educate staff and students within the district concerning issues of stereotyping and discrimination relative to age, handicap, national origin, sex, race, sexual orientation and religion. The committee takes the initiative in: encouraging district staff members to review their materials and practices for instances of stereotyping and/or discrimination; and encouraging the district administration to review its practices, policies, staffing and other procedures for instances of stereotyping and/or discrimination."

Several assumptions prevail: 1) Building teacher *awareness* about sexism, racism, class bias and other forms of discrimination is essential for change. Growing personal awareness must be linked to educational practice, and human rights integrated into everything a teacher does. 2) The classroom *process* is essential as the curriculum for assuring educational equity. 3) Staff and students must learn about unique experiences and contributions of various subordinated groups in society. 4) Also important is recognition of the impact of various forms of discrimination.

Recognizing the need for professional leadership in education toward these goals, the Human Rights Committee, beginning in the 1981-82 school year, gained district support for a staff development program under the consultative leadership of Dr. Nancy Schniedewind, a specialist in educational equity and faculty member of the State University of New York at New Palz. The program that has been implemented under her leadership has enabled staff to:

1) examine and change forms of bias that thwart educational equity; 2) modify curriculum to include a diversity of people; and 3) learn pedagogical strategies and processes for promoting positive classroom interactions among diverse students.

Some two hundred teachers, support staff and administrators have participated in some aspect of staff development in human rights. This has included: 1) week-long summer in-service courses such as "Promoting Race- and Sex-Fair Learning," "Cooperatively Structured Learning" and "Conflict Managers Training;" 2) after-school human rights education courses and support groups; and 3) two-day-a-month classroom visits in all district schools by the consultant and teaching peers. Workshops have been offered for parents and the Administrative Council.

Pairing a strong committee with an experienced consultant has proven effective. Teachers have support and direction in changing curriculum, pedagogy, classroom interaction, and institutional policy. In the short term teachers use lessons that raise student awareness of stereotyping and the effects of discrimination. Teachers and students scan posters, textbooks and other materials with reference to full and fair representation of all kinds of people. Cross-cultural exchange programs are developed. The long-range goal is for students and teachers to be aware of human dignity and human rights in everything they do day to day. Ultimately, students should be able to function in and contribute to creating a multiracial, nonsexist society that respects the human rights of all.

Staff Development for Human Rights Education

The model used to raise staff members' awareness of human rights issues integrates: 1) the development of personal power, 2) group support, 3) critical awareness of human rights issues, and 4) action. In-service opportunities and support groups all are geared to the many facets of a complex and interrelated set of issues.

First, staff workshops and courses are structured to include participatory activities in which teachers and support staff explore their own attitudes and values regarding race, sex, class, etc. By sharing their own experiences and socialization regarding these issues, their own lives are validated as important sources of knowledge. This supports their sense of personal efficacy. For example, participants are asked to share in small groups an early racial experience. They are then asked to reflect together on how this and other early experiences affected their views of race. After next sharing within groups an instance when they challenged a racist statement or action, they discuss the ways teachers and support staff can use their personal power to support human rights.

Second, workshops and courses are structured to provide teachers with group support. Some workshop time is allotted to sharing practical classroom problems or successes related to human rights issues. Ideas, strategies and resources are generated to deal with problems. Teachers learn skills for

cooperative, effective group interaction, skills that will enable them to interact in caring and equitable ways and skills that they can teach to students.

Teachers participate in activities, for example, that help them analyze their group process and determine what about the process is helping or hindering equitable contributions by all group members. Teachers practice responses to racist, sexist or homophobic statements. They learn conflict resolution strategies. Teachers need practice with these skills themselves in order to teach them to students and thereby create a classroom respectful of the human rights of all.

Third, teachers must develop a critical awareness of human rights issues in general and specifically, their relation to student interaction, the curriculum, and school environment. Teachers read materials on racism, sexism, class bias, homophobia and ageism, discuss the ideas generated and then apply their awareness to their own school environment. They examine competition and cooperation as ideas and values and consider how they undergird conditions limiting, or fostering, human rights.

There are many ways in which teachers put on this "new pair of glasses" to look at their daily teaching lives. Teachers, for example, examined bulletin boards in their schools to see if and how people of color were represented. If they found few, they considered what kind of messages students were getting about the diversity of the world in which we live. They further explored their school environment to determine to what extent it projected the image that "white is right." Teachers examined the themes and messages about males and females in the books they chose to order or helped distribute through book clubs or other channels. In addition to examining computer software for sexism, they determined to what extent it fostered competitive or cooperative, violent or nonviolent values.

Change often ensued. Teachers reassessed the books they used and asked, for example, whether *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* projected stereotypical images of African people or whether *The Learning Tree* was sexist. They supplemented their curriculum with materials that teach about stereotyping, discrimination and ways to bring greater equality, *Open Minds to Equality* being one valuable reference. Workshop participants tackled head-on classroom incidents of name-calling. They developed new programs to broaden students' appreciation of human diversity. For instance, classes embarked on cross-cultural exchange programs which involved letter-writing and exchange visits between their country school and schools in New York City. This dovetailed well with exchange programs with schools in Quebec, Madrid and France which were already being implemented in the middle school and high school.

In implementing cooperative learning, teachers considered ways not only to structure learning cooperatively, but to teach about competition and cooperation as ideas and values. They utilized ideas from *Cooperative Learning, Cooperative Lives* in addition to developing their own activities. For example, one teacher adapted a research project on famous New Yorkers. In addition to structuring it cooperatively, she asked students to focus on finding out how the

people they researched cooperated with others to create a better world. This not only helped students focus, but integrated the theme of cooperation into the unit.

With the support of their principals, Dr. Schniedewind and the Human Rights Curriculum Committee, teachers have taken the initiative for making plans to begin conflict managers programs in two elementary schools and the middle school in the fall of 1989. The availability of summer training for teachers interested in conflict management, plus consultative support during the school year, makes possible increased teacher involvement in these programs.

Having taken action to create change in their school environments, school personnel are empowered. They often share their efforts with others in subsequent workshops and courses districtwide and form support groups once a month after school. Their enthusiasm propels the district to provide additional staff development opportunities, along with appropriate materials. New classroom strategies are implemented. The cycle of change continues.

Human Rights Education with Students

Through the adult-initiated human rights activities students, too, come to develop personal power, group support and critical awareness, and then to act.

The goal is to create classroom environments in which students know that they are valued, regardless of religion, race, class, sex or sexual orientation. Students should experience this acceptance both by the way they are treated, and because they see people like themselves in the curriculum. An Asian student noticed that the class was assigned material by and about Asians as part of the curriculum. A multiply handicapped student understood he was a valued person because the teacher had structured cooperative groups in which his unique contributions were an essential part. Such experiences provide all students a sense of their personal power.

Similarly, teachers helped students develop perspectives and skills with which to provide each other collective support. Teachers structured groups cooperatively so students received and gave help to each other in order to accomplish a specific learning task. They taught students cooperative skills for more effective group work and had them respond to processing questions after an activity. For example, a teacher asked each group member to write down, and then discuss, behaviors that helped or hindered their group in completing the academic task. They were then discussed as a group and a class and areas for change pinpointed. In this way, students shared responsibility for creating a learning environment that was supportive of all.

Students develop a critical awareness of human rights issues in much the same way teachers and administrators do. They read, think and talk about various forms of discrimination and stereotyping. Then they examine their own environment for ways it is fair or not so fair to different groups of people. Students read, for example, *This Child's Gonna Live* to learn more about racism. They participated in activities from *Facing History and Ourselves* to examine anti-Semitism.

Eighth graders analyzed their new science book to see how women and people of color were portrayed. They discussed the hidden influence on their own goals and aspirations of what turned out to be traditional, sexist depictions in their text. Elementary students examined their typical responses to conflict situations and discovered they generally represented "fight or flight." They became interested in alternative behaviors which are possible between those two extremes. Middle schoolers working in community service programs with the elderly first examined their stereotypical views of old people and then considered the sources and accuracy of those stereotypes. Their volunteer activity took on new dimensions.

Action is the outcome of increased critical awareness. Fourth graders responded assertively to put-downs directed against themselves or others. They called others on racist or sexist remarks. Middle school art students analyzed magazine pictures for racism and sexism, drew sex- and race-fair pictures and presented their findings and pictures to other students. Elementary students studied various native American peoples and presented information they'd learned to other classes. Many students involved in exchange programs had their first meaningful deep encounter with a person of another race or culture. Boys chose books about women for their book reports and passed them on to their friends. Students collectively organized an assembly for Martin Luther King Day which integrated their personal feelings and thoughts with information and ideas concerning racial justice. As students took action, they gained both personal power and a sense of group support with which they can create change.

Assessment and the Future

Throughout the staff development process it has been necessary to look critically at the process itself, to assess the value of the content knowledge being imparted and to look to individuals, classrooms and the educational institution for evidence of change. The first practical step, taken since 1981 without exception, has been to receive written evaluations from participants in every summer course, day-long workshop and after-school course taught by Dr. Schniedewind. Noting the diversity of participants among them, district and building administrators, support staff and parents as well as teachers, preschool through high school, the feedback has been reassuringly positive. Scores of five showed up most frequently on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), with fours next and an occasional three. Evaluation blanks asked about insights and information gained and about the applicability to classroom activity. They asked what had proved most valuable and what least valuable and what suggestions there were for future district planning.

Implementation, too, has been demonstrated repeatedly. Since the courses themselves have included personal involvement and modeling of individual behaviors and group activities, much has been replicated in personal interactions and the classroom. The district's expectations for implementation have been made very clear. Participants have regularly shared with each other examples of their use of, and problems with, human rights insights and activities

in their teaching or administrative roles. Others have listened and acted. Simultaneously, the district has continued to provide funding for the human rights consultant to spend two days a month visiting with individual staff in the five schools in the district. Another necessary ingredient, her service has provided practical, individual help to staff seeking to implement learnings from their courses and workshops.

In 1987 the Human Rights Curriculum Committee undertook a "retrospective" evaluation of the program which moved beyond the limitations of the evaluation blanks completed at the end of specific courses. It reflected six years of "history" for the program, a chance to see if the human rights effort had moved beyond talk or mere resolve.

The responses were powerful. The program has personally affected teachers and support staff members in varied ways: "(It) has given me a lot of content material and resource materials for use in classes, as well as the excitement and enthusiasm engendered to make change in curriculum and teaching techniques" "It has made me more aware of the plight of minorities and women in this country. . ." "I have become more sensitized to the importance of my influence on peers and students with regard to respect for all humans."

Also apparent was evidence of real change in classrooms across the district. Oft-mentioned were resource materials, teaching strategies and interpersonal relationships. "I now have cooperatively structured groups, cooperative tests and do much less lecturing. . ." Regarding stereotypes and discrimination: "Role playing, class discussions, Black History Month, focusing on community service with the elderly, textbook selection, who I help and in what fashion in my classroom . . . ask girls to be spokespeople . . . direct girls toward science/math/technical stuff, encourage boys with regard to nurturing young children, needlecraft." And so it goes.

Something significant has happened and continues to happen as this district educates for human rights. Attendance at courses and workshops holds up; word-of-mouth has indeed been effective. More and more classrooms deal with the issues both directly and indirectly. Chance conversation often turns to instances of racism, sexism, ageism, etc., pointing to a heightened awareness of and sensitivity to the issues.

The school district as an educational institution regularly reminds itself or is reminded of its responsibilities to make change to insure equity. Administrative appointments, staff recruitment of minorities, faithful adherence to Title IX legislation and laws on the handicapped and pay equity, all are live issues in the district. Meanwhile, the compliance committees and the Human Rights Curriculum Committee continue to function actively and have been promised district support for the immediate future.

Obviously these human rights education efforts have not been without problems and disappointments. The program is voluntary; teachers become involved not because they have to, but because they want to. While incentives include in-service credits and, in some instances, pay, there are still

many teachers in the district who haven't been involved in human rights education. This prevents formation of the critical mass necessary for full school-wide change.

Since the program is voluntary, it must meet teachers' self-defined needs and interests. In the early years of the program, the focus was on educational equity. After large numbers of teachers had taken courses in that area, they expressed interest in process-oriented aspects of building a democratic classroom and school, such as cooperatively structured learning and conflict management. It is a critical challenge to the human rights education program to find ways to maintain equity issues as one of its central foci.

There is still a long way to go to affect positively the discriminatory attitudes and behavior which persist. The change fostered by the human rights education program constantly comes up against the prevailing conservative social attitudes of this decade and the power of the experience of living in a relatively isolated, homogeneous, white, middle class community. The insular nature of such community life breeds fear of difference. For example, middle school students recently had great difficulty interacting positively with students from a community different from theirs at a retreat setting. Many high school students still "blame the victim" for social problems rather than look to institutionalized discrimination and their own economic privileges as sources of such problems. Competition is alive and well, from athletic awards dinners to the elementary science fair.

This is all to suggest that *intentionality* by teachers, administrators and the district as a whole is essential for long-term change. A commitment to human rights as a priority must be ongoing whether it be challenging racist, sexist or homophobic statements, providing cooperative alternatives to traditional competitive awards, planning introductory cooperative activities at interschool retreats, challenging the "excellence vs. diversity" polarity that often surfaces in affirmative action hiring efforts, or examining the unstudied effects of privilege on self and others. The challenge to the human rights education program will be to continue to find ways to raise consciousness of human rights issues that will motivate ongoing, intentional action for change.

It is safe to say that what has become apparent, despite problems and contradictions, is that a staff development program in human rights education can work. In the Shoreham-Wading River School District such a carefully planned and executed program has established a firm base, with much already accomplished and much more to be done. Its sponsors are convinced that it can be done where the issues are both covert and overt in schools homogeneous or heterogeneous, large or small, rural or urban.

NOTES

1. For more detail about this model see "Reflective Minds, International Hearts: Joining Humanistic Education and Critical Theory," Lee Bell and Nancy Schniedewind, *Journal of Education*, Vol. 169, #2, 1987, pp. 55-77.

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DEVELOPING PARTICIPATORY UNDERSTANDING

A DEMOCRATIC APPROACH TO TEACHING ABOUT THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

(from Promising Practices in Education)

Clarissa Sawyer

During the summer of 1987 Kathleen Travers decided to create a curriculum unit on the United States Constitution for her 8th grade social studies classes at the Fletcher School in the city of Cambridge, Massachusetts. She was prompted to create the unit in honor of the Constitution's Bicentennial anniversary. But she faced some challenges. The majority of her students are Portuguese, Hispanic, and Black, and two to three years below grade level—75% never graduate from high school. "We're dealing with 13- to 15-year-old-micro-wave-MTV-LL Cool Jay Rappers, and here I was going to talk about 1787," she said. Despite these challenges, she designed an 8-week curriculum unit. What follows is a description of the curriculum and her experience implementing it during the 1987-88 school year.

Kathleen first introduced the Constitution and the concept behind it with the "Eraser Game." Students lined up in two rows, facing each other, and then were told to "Play the game" with no further instructions. In confusion, they asked, "What are the rules?" and were then instructed to pass a blackboard eraser from student to student to the end of each row, and for the last students in each row to bring the eraser back to the beginning.

But when the erasers had been passed only half way down each row, Kathleen announced, "You must now hop forward." A moment later, "Walk backwards," then "Close your eyes." According to Kathleen this continued "amidst much laughter and chaos" until a few minutes before the end of the class period, when she asked,

"What's the problem?"

"The rules."

"What did I do?"

"You kept changing them on us."

"Well, we have a document in this county that's been good for two hundred years. There's only been 26 changes in it."

A discussion on rules followed: family rules, rules for school, and rules with friends. Homework consisted of writing down several family rules.

Over the next few classes, Kathleen introduced the Constitution's Preamble. Students translated it into everyday street language using a worksheet (see Box 1) and dictionaries while Kathleen worked at the blackboard. "You do not talk to inner-city kids about 'domestic tranquillity' and 'provide for the general welfare' because welfare means Food Stamps," Kathleen explained.

> *I asked students who "We the People" were and explained that when the Constitution was written, slaves and women were not included. Then we tackled "in order to form a more perfect union," taking this literally, line by line. Later, when they rewrote the Preamble as a class and decided how they wanted it to sound, it became sensible to them. The original language is too archaic. It meant nothing to them. When we had finished they knew what the Preamble meant and why we had to form rules for our country.*

Once students understood the meaning of the Preamble they memorized it, using the "cloze" technique. This involved having students complete a different worksheet every day for a week, filling in the words left blank in the first phrase in the Constitution. On Monday the worksheet started with, "We the _____ of _____ _____," and on Tuesday it said, "_____ the people. . ."

"By Friday reciting the Preamble and writing it out (spelling did not count) was a piece of cake for them."

Shy students were allowed to recite the Preamble to Kathleen before school. She rewarded all students with Bicentennial commemorative pencils, which had mixed results. "The kids thought they could sell the pencils for more money on the street, until they found they weren't worth very much," she said with a chuckle.

In the next part of the unit, Kathleen introduced students to background information on the Constitution and the first ten Amendments, again making use of dictionaries and worksheets to analyze words in the Amendments.

> *It was painstaking, many a day. But when we came to the Miranda Rights, many of the students who are on probation told unbelievable stories of what it was like to be booked, so it became very real to the kids in the classroom: 'You have the right to remain silent, you have the right to an attorney.' It was a very good experience for them.*

Another learning technique Kathleen used in this part of the unit was to rewrite several court cases and have students discuss solutions to the cases in small groups of four or five. She also had students play two simulation games, "The Tap dancer" and "The Aliens."

Box 1
Preamble Worksheet

The Constitution of the United States has several parts. It begins with the *Preamble*, an introduction. It states the purposes of the Constitution.

Preamble	**Explanation**
We the people of the U.S.	
in order to from a more perfect union	
establish justice,	
insure domestic tranquillity,	
provide for the common defense,	
promote the general welfare	
and secure the blessings of liberty	
to ourselves and our posterity,	
do ordain and establish	
this Constitution of the U.S.A.	

In "The Tap dancer," students confront issues of ownership and property. Students are told they live in a two-family home and come home from work tired, but the man who lives upstairs is a tap dancer at a night club who likes to tap dance before he goes out to work, thus disturbing students' rest. Working in their small groups, students come up with solutions using their class notes and copies of the Constitution, which they previously have highlighted for main ideas and supporting details. I pull a lot of study skills into this.

For "The Aliens" game, Kathleen co-taught the class with a lawyer from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Students were told that a spaceship had come from outer space and taken over where students live, allowing them to keep only five of the ten Amendments. First, each student decided which five Amendments they would choose to keep, then they met with their small group to work out a group decision. Kathleen was shocked to learn which Amendment all 46 students kept as their number one choice—the right to bear arms.

"None of them would give that up! Talk about the influence of Rambo and the Exterminator, and that whole scene they live with (in the inner-city). It was incredible. I just stood back and said to myself, 'Wow, this is a lesson.' "

The 8-week unit culminated in the creation of a class constitution. First, students took the preamble home with them and wrote at least 3–5 rules they would like to see in their classroom. This was followed by 2–3 days of arguing and compromising in small groups to come up with a group draft, which

reduced 23 individual preambles to four group preambles. Next, the class voted on each line of the constitution, initially using a 2/3 majority.

> *They went with 2/3 for about three days and then said, "Miss Travers, we're having trouble," because 12 to 15 kids were needed to ratify each line. By this time they were bribing each other with onion- and cheese-flavored Doodles, Ring Dings, and anything they could to switch votes. There was heavy lobbying! It was tense between them. So finally they said, "Can we go with simple majority?" And I said, "Oh, you finally realized 2/3 is a tough scene to handle."*

When all the lines were approved, Kathleen next asked students what order they wanted the lines of their constitution to appear in. Kathleen recalls that this question resulted in "unbelievable outbreaks of what was going to be ranked first, second and third, and what about the punishments if these rules weren't followed. The punishments ranged from staying after school, to the Rambos, who said take them out to the recess yard and shoot them."

When students had agreed on the final wording of the class constitution, Kathleen copied it onto a huge piece of primary chart paper. Then students voted to ratify it. Once the constitution was ratified it was ready to be signed. But before the class could sign the constitution they had to make another decision: Who was going to go first? Kathleen suggested several criteria for deciding, which included class officers, alphabetical order, birthdays, first initials, last initials, or who's group was best.

Only when students had agreed on the order in which students would sign the constitution did Kathleen allow each student to come up, dip their feather pen into a bottle of India ink and sign the constitution. Students kept their feathers as a momento, and the school principal was invited to witness the event and join the class in a small party. The final step in the long process was to hang the constitution in the corridor for the whole school to see.

"They were very proud of this; it was a hard and long process. I told them about how the original delegation had boarded up the window, even though it was hot, because they didn't want people to hear what was going on. They said, 'Imagine what it was like with no air conditioning!' "

The constitution was ratified in late fall of 1987, and "called to order" four times during the school year to deal with the problem of "put-downs," specifically forbidden by the constitution of both classes (see Box 2). Kathleen says that put-downs are "a big issue" for this age group. A "call to order" meant a class meeting to review the issues and the rules of the class constitution.

Unfortunately, none of the other teachers students had were willing to make time for a call to order in the [illegible] classes, so it was left up to Kathleen to make time in her class schedule. Kathleen thought the reason other teachers might be reluctant to host a call to order was because "some people are really uptight about giving up their power and letting the delegates come forward."

Kathleen herself enjoyed the process of "watching them struggle . . . because it's a learning process for me and for them." As a result of the call to

order: "The kids accused of put-downs luckily have not been shot, but they have been made to apologize publicly for whatever has been said to their fellow students, and then there's a round of applause, which is a nice feeling that hopefully encourages them not to do it again."

Box 2
Constitutions of Two 8th Grade Classes

Constitution 1: We, the students of 8C, in order to form a more perfect and organized class, to promote a cheerful spirit among ourselves, and to provide for a common education, establish these rules:

A: Respect each other's privacy
B: Listen to others when talking
C: The freedom to speak your feelings
D: Students have the right to explain themselves and their actions
E: Students should respect their school
F: To give help to each other when needed
G: Don't put anyone down

We do ordain and establish this Constitution of the Class of '88. Any changes will be made by the Class Officers making motions for members to vote upon in Social Studies Class. Simple majority is needed. Punishment for breaking rules A and E only: Thirty minutes in detention and copy this Constitution three times.

Constitution 2: We, the class of '88, in order to establish this Class Constitution, have written these following rules:

A: Have respect for teachers and fellow classmates
B: Cooperate with each other
C: Students have a right to explain themselves and their actions
D: No spreading rumors
E: No "put-downs"
To provide students with a good education
To promote all Eighth Graders
To secure the blessings of 8R.

Any changes in this Class Constitution will be by secret ballot. A simple majority is required. Punishment for breaking rule E only is: Write this Constitution three times during recess.

Kathleen Travers' eight-week social studies unit on the U.S. Constitution takes 8th grade students through a step-by-step process that transforms a 200-year-old document from meaningless words to everyday language students can understand. Once students understand what the words are saying they learn what the words mean in practice by a class constitution. Through this learning process rules are redefined from constraints imposed by

adults, to children's own consensually derived guidelines. In this way the words of men far removed from these "micro-wave-MTV-LL Cool Jay kids" by time, class, and culture are revealed as having a direct bearing on the lives of children of the inner-city.

HOLISTIC HISTORY AND STUDENTS AT LAKESIDE SCHOOL

Dwight Gibb

"It takes a long time to change the way you think."
Mark Mader, student

American history is a challenge for high school teachers who wish to work in depth. Our nation's political vocabulary has become simplified. Textbooks, whose mandate is readability, render the contours of history so smooth as to make even the most controversial choices appear to have been inevitable. Students, perceiving a complex world and an uncertain future, are attracted to the most obvious facts. Most pressing, information explosions increase the data to be mastered and make it difficult to find time for critical thought.

Are there solutions, or are teachers destined to an ever more enfeebled role, as the rate of change accelerates and as information stacks up? We believe that solutions are possible, and further, that in adapting pedagogy to the realities of our age, we can address a more fundamental problem. The core difficulty seems to be that for decades educators have applied the mentality of the assembly line to schools, compartmentalizing data and lining information into artificial sequences. It is time to put learning back together again, to allow courses to function as minds do, in a multidimensional fashion. The approach described here involves integrative techniques, many of which history teachers have long utilized, but with the difference that, instead of keeping them in a subordinate role, we render them central. They include: an inquiry-oriented and interdisciplinary approach; an integration of time; and the treatment of information in terms of systems.

The content of this course is indicated in the "mind map." But content is less important than the processes utilized. We describe them by delineating themes which are sustained throughout the year. Readers who dislike diagrams can let the text stand on its own, while people who are more

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visually oriented will find the themes printed in boldface in both text and mind map. A syllabus is available for readers who wish to go further with these ideas.

The first theme is **process**, a concept maintained without mentioning it explicitly. By emphasizing it, we eliminate the need to study in detail all the data in a textbook. For example, we concentrate on political process only in the winter, and on international processes only in the spring. This focus assists in thinking in terms of systems.

A sense of **systems** gives the parts meaning. We have learned from our dyslexic students that, for them, a view of the whole is virtually essential to an understanding of details, but for all of us with a right as well as a left brain, an awareness of wholes enables us to see more clearly. We view systems throughout the year, beginning with small ones, such as the Constitution, and building, until we can think of our society and even the world as systems. In most cases we are treating topics which would be covered in any course, and the broader focus requires little extra time.

The idea of the **future** informs the entire year. Adults define themselves in terms of the future as a matter of course. To ask young people to exclude the future from a consideration of the American experience is to ask them to discipline themselves in a manner which we do not impose on ourselves. Eleventh and twelfth graders are only too aware of being dragged into adulthood, and the possibility that one might be able to understand the future is intriguing to them. We establish a vocabulary at the beginning, and then use a basic technique of futurists, that of forecasting alternative futures. This can be done while studying the past. We speculate about historical decisions, such as the Missouri Compromise, in terms of "futures" which might have been considered by the decision makers. The exercise helps students to let go of the sense that all events in history were inevitable, and to glimpse the power of choice. After practice in this way students acquire the habit of asking what the alternatives are, as their first step in investigations of problems. Work with the ideas of paradigms and change (described below) complements the forecasting exercises, and renders the thrust of the course forward-looking.

We work toward a sophisticated understanding of perception by using three themes: **perspectives**, **paradigms**, and **prejudice**. In a sense the entire course is a consideration of **perspectives**. After a discussion of the relationship between bias and objectivity, we engage in one long "believing game" of the sort taught in ESR seminars. By springtime, nearly all readings represent strong biases. The cumulative effect is one of increased confidence:

> *I felt that we were above all our sources, looking down and choosing what we agreed with. In the past I have found myself under all the information, absorbing as much as I could take, and believing everything to be true.*
>
> Randy Sill

Paradigms are frames of reference, more comprehensive than perspectives. We discuss paradigms which may have informed decisions. Sometimes we reflect on our own paradigms. For example, after having read

about the decision to drop the Bomb, and having seen a powerful film, we found ourselves with no hope of reconciling differences of opinion. We used a "paradigm check" to establish a base for further reflection. One paradigm was reducing American casualties, another was saving both American and Japanese lives. But a tentative hand was raised by an Asian-American, who suggested that Japan had had legitimate grievances against the US before Pearl Harbor. In arguing positions, we had lost sight of underlying interests:

> *The work with paradigms has opened up a new world for me. It is such a simple concept, yet also very important. I learned what peoples' motivations were, where they were coming from, how they are thinking. It was useful not only in school, but also in the real world. I could successfully predict responses, see deeper into each answer, and ultimately communicate better. The idea of paradigms changed what I perceived to be reality. I found a new depth.*
>
> Randy Sill

The final theme in the progression on perception is **prejudice**, always an intense concern of young people. We introduce it after treatment of the Civil War, and return to it in reference to our own lives, to society, and to international relations. Its ultimate importance is as a window into the unconscious mind. By year-end students realize that some cultural values are prejudices which have been transmitted at an unconscious level. From here it is but a step to independent thinking

The concept of **change** links everything mentioned heretofore. At first the possibility that there might be a connection between personal choice and societal change seems impossibly abstract. But with the observation of successful reforms, glimmers of competence emerge. One student writes, "I will never forget Little Rock!" A more fundamental sense of empowerment occurs as students perceive that their own ideas have changed. This is always a struggle, and we are reminded of Freeman Dyson's dictum that it is extremely difficult for any person to give up an idea which he or she has held for a long time, no matter how persuasive the evidence to the contrary. But once having changed themselves, students are able to envision changing society:

> *I have learned in this class not as much about history as I have always thought of it, but more of* why *our country is the way it is, and* why *I think what I think. I've learned* what *I think concerning prejudice, war, weapons, peace, justice and other things, and, hopefully, I've learned how to discover, in the future, what I think about other things that I will encounter. I learned about our society, about its future, about my future, and about how I can control all of these.*
>
> Claire Modie

The essential force of our effort derives from its capacity to coincide with the learners' personal experiences. At a time when they are doing the work of identity formation, we are assisting them to discover the power of self-

awareness and to make connections with society. The tool which has made their journey possible seems to be the idea of integration. Integration of: emotion and intellect; of past and future; of culture and culture; of men and women; of the mind—right, left, conscious and unconscious; and of self and history. We have been putting together parts of education which have been fragmented by years of over-specialization. In this sense we are sharing in advances being made in other sectors of society today.

USING ORAL HISTORIES TO ADDRESS SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE CLASSROOM*

Samuel Totten

"Education is a kind of continuing dialogue and a dialogue assumes in the nature of the case different points of view."

Robert Hutchins

During the past twenty years the use of oral history in the classroom (both conducting oral histories as well as listening to and reading transcripts of them) has become an outstanding and protean pedagogical device. Oral histories can be a powerful method for addressing key social issues—issues as diverse as the nuclear arms race, racism, war, human rights, genocide, environmental issues, civil disobedience, hunger, etc.—in social studies, English, and science classrooms, as well as others.

Willa K. Baum has defined oral history as " . . . the tape recording of reminiscences about which the narrator can speak from first-hand knowledge. Through preplanned interviews, the information is captured in question and answer form. . . The interviewer must have some background knowledge on the subject."[1] In the classroom the various uses of oral history can be used to enliven, enhance, and supplement the standard curriculum. Conducting oral histories is a hands-on activity that can be easily taught; and it is one that, more often than not, fully engages the interest of most students. Concomitantly, it is process in which students naturally use numerous skills, including reading, writing, and speaking.

Many excellent articles have been written both about oral history and social issues, but few have focused on why and how oral histories can be used to address social issues in the classroom. The latter concern will be the focus of this article.

*Adapted from "Using Oral Histories to Address Social Issues in the Social Studies Classroom." *Social Education*, February 1989, pp. 114-116, 125.

Rationales

There are a number of excellent reasons as to why students should study about key social and/or controversial issues: such study assists students in becoming informed about myriad aspects of the world that directly and indirectly affect their lives; the study should help the students understand and appreciate the interdependent nature of the world we live in; and the inclusion of social issues in the curriculum provides students with opportunities to engage in critical and creative thinking, reflective inquiry, and decision making—all of which are crucial abilities and skills for citizens of a democracy, especially if the democracy is to remain vital.

In regard to the latter point, Harold Rugg asserted that:

> *If we are to have consent in a democratic people it must be built upon the study of controversial issues, because such study is the intellectual foundation of the schools. One of the chief planks of my program is that the young people shall* be urged to take thought before they take sides. *but it is obvious that to "take thought," to make choices, they must confront the alternatives set out clearly before them. How else can human beings practice decision-making than by confronting issues? To keep issues out of the school program is to keep thought out of it.*[2]

There are also outstanding reasons for using oral history to address social and/or controversial issues: (1) it is an excellent method for "personalizing" social issues; (2) when used properly, it can introduce students to diverse points of view on an issue; (3) if students conduct the oral histories of a person who has been involved with or has certain knowledge about a social issue, it permits students to engage in conversation with a "living curricular resource"; and (4) because a person's vital concern about a social issue has its roots in personal beliefs, opinions, and experiences, the oral history is one of the most efficacious and fascinating ways to tap into such sources of concern.

By combining the use of oral history and social issues, teachers can also address aspects of what Elliot Eisner refers to as the "null curriculum":

> *It is my thesis that what schools do not teach may be as important as what they teach. I argue this position because ignorance is not simply a neutral void; it has important effects on the kinds of options one is able to consider, the alternatives that one can examine, and the perspectives from which one can view a situation or a problem. The absence of a set of considerations or the inability to use certain processes for appraising context biases the evidence one is able to take into account.*[3]

Introductory Process

Prior to having the students conduct oral histories on their own, I have found it useful to read the several gripping oral histories that deal with social issues. The key is to select oral histories that stimulate their interest in oral histories and motivate them to read additional oral histories or even to conduct some

themselves. Furthermore, the oral history that teachers read to students should relate to the social issue currently under study.

There are numerous fascinating and powerful oral histories available for this purpose, and I have successfully used selections from the works listed below vis-a-vis the following topics: war (Mark Baker's *Nam: The Vietnam War in the Words of Soldiers Who Fought There;* Kathryn Marshall's *In the Combat Zone: An Oral History of American Women in Vietnam, 1966–1975;* Studs Terkel's *The Good War;* Rand's *Anthem;* Bradbury's *Farenheit 451*); deprivation of human rights (*Voices of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans*); prejudice, discrimination, and genocide (Dorbus' *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin: A White Book;* Dorothy Rabinowitz's *New Lives: Survivors of the Holocaust in America;* Howard Roiter's *Voices from the Holocaust;* and Sylvia Rothchild's *Voices from the Holocaust*); prejudice, discrimination, or racism (Theodore Rosengarten's *All God's Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw,* or John Tateishi's *And Justice for All: An Oral History of the Japanese Detention Camps*); nuclear power (Leslie J. Freeman's *Nuclear Witnesses: Insiders Speak Out*); the nuclear arms race and/or nuclear war (the Japan Broadcasting Corporation's *Unforgettable Fire* or Sam Totten and Martha Wescoat Totten's *Facing the Dangers: Interviews With 20 Anti-Nuclear Activists*); and capital punishment (Doug Magee's *Slow Coming Dark: Interviews on Death Row*).

Once the teacher reads the oral history to the class, students' views and insights may be solicited: What did they find most interesting and why?; Did they glean any new information and if so, what?; Was the information presented in the oral history similar to or different from the type of information found in other nonfiction text or sources? This is a worthwhile exercise because it encourages students to examine how oral histories are developed, the type of information they contain (e.g., factual accounts often intermixed with opinions, biases, and local color), as well as the power and value of the stories. This is also an excellent time to fully discuss such concerns as point of view, personal bias, opinion versus fact, etc. The latter is crucial since it is imperative for students to understand that oral histories do not constitute the one and only point of view on a topic. Ideally, this is also a good time to discuss the point that more often than not there are numerous sides to an issue—not just two—and that oral historians and readers of oral histories must keep this in mind.

In place of, or in addition to, the teacher's reading an oral history to the class, students can be assigned to read one or two oral histories that address social issues. Teachers can suggest a number of oral histories they have found captivating and informative or those they think students would find most engaging. The point is to introduce students to the beauty and power inherent in many oral histories.

Using Oral Histories in the Classroom

There are innumerable ways to use oral histories in the regular course of study. The simplest method is this: whenever a social issue arises during the course of study, the students should read a series of oral histories that are applicable to the issue.

In a history class, of course, there is ample opportunity to do this. For instance, during a study of the antebellum period, the students could read oral histories that deal with the following social issues: slavery, racism, or the Civil War. Or, during a course of study of a particular event such as World War II, the students could read oral histories about genocide (e.g., the Holocaust), racism (e.g., the round-up of the Japanese in the United States), or the war itself (e.g., by U.S. fighting men or by survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki).

Some English teachers may think, "How are we going to incorporate social issues into our curriculum?" The fact is, many of the greatest and/or most fascinating works of literature that they teach deal with social issues. A very brief listing of specific social issues and the works that deal with such issues will be listed here to illustrate this point: censorship (Milton's *Aeropagitica;* Orwell's *1984;* Rand's *Anthem;* Bradbury's *Farenheit 451*); deprivation of human rights (Kafka's *The Trial;* Huxley's *Brave New World;* Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *1984;* Miller's *The Crucible;* Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Desinovich;* Wiesel's *Night*); racism (Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn;* Faulkner's *A Light in August;* Wright's *Black Boy* and *Native Son;* Ellison's *Invisible Man;* Walker's *The Color Purple*); and the list could go on and on. Again, whenever a social issue arises in a piece of literature, oral histories that address that social issue could be incorporated into the study in order to enrich and enhance it.

Science teachers, too, constantly teach subject matter that naturally invites in-depth discussion and study of social issues. For instance, during a study of genetics, the students could key in on genetic engineering. Or during a study of the environment, the students could focus on any of a whole host of topics: the green house effect, acid rain, toxic wastes, the pros/cons of nuclear power, the rampant extinction of flora and fauna across the globe and the concomitant ramifications, etc. In a physics course a valuable study could involve the inextricable connection between civilian nuclear power and nuclear weapons. Fascinating oral histories could be conducted and/or read on all of these subjects.

Another curricular area that would greatly benefit from the use of oral histories is health. Just a listing of some of the topics that could be explored graphically illustrates this point: AIDS, tobacco and whether its use should be totally banned from public places, alcohol abuse, abuse of other drugs, etc.

Over the years I have designed some very specific and useful activities for incorporating oral histories that address social issues into the curriculum. Five of these will be presented here:

- First, a class could conduct an examination of the various viewpoints (or the various types of information) presented in the class text and the various oral histories.

- Second, a class could discuss whether the text or oral histories present the fullest or most powerful insights into a particular social issue.

• Third, it is valuable to conduct oral or written discussions on students' points of view about the social issue to ascertain and examine whether the insights they derived from the text and oral histories served to corroborate their views or caused them to re-examine, revise, or completely change their views.

• Fourth, two pairs of students holding opposing viewpoints on the social issue could do additional research by using other oral histories and other sources, and then they could debate. In doing so, they should cite their own findings as well as others'.

• Fifth, experts and/or social activists (many of whom are also experts) could be invited to the class to share their stories and insights with the students. The teacher or a student could tape these talks as oral histories. A question-and-answer period at the end of the recording sessions could be held in order to avail the students an opportunity to interact with the guests.

Once students have been introduced to oral histories, many immediately want to know if or when they can conduct one. I have come to the conclusion that the most effective way to introduce students to the proper way of conducting an oral history is to demonstrate it.[4] To do so, I have always chosen not to use a student as the interviewee, but a person whose oral history I was interested in conducting. This activity provides students with a true look at the process and helps to remove a lot of the mystery from it. Simultaneously, it builds upon the students' existing interest and desire to conduct oral histories on their own.

Prior to conducting the in-class oral history, it is worthwhile to involve all the students in developing questions to ask the interviewee. This exercise serves several different purposes: it provides the students with a vested interest in the oral history the teacher will conduct because the interviewee will be answering their (the students') questions; and once the exercise has concluded, the teacher and students can discuss the merit, or lack thereof, of different questions and eliminate those that seemed less satisfactory. The best questions, we quickly come to learn, encourage the interviewee to be expansive rather than those that elicit yes, no, or one-word answers. The best questions also attempt to deeply probe into a person's beliefs, feelings, etc.

It is a good idea for the teacher to tape the oral history so it can be used as a reference for students on how to conduct oral histories. Prior to conducting their own oral histories, students should be encouraged to review the teacher's tape to refresh their memories in regard to the fine details required for conducting a sound oral history.

Concomitantly, a class period could be profitably spent listening to the teacher-made tape in order to critique the teacher/interviewer's use of follow-up questions on interesting points in the interview or when the interviewee did not fully answer or expound on a question. During this session the teacher could turn off the tape each time the interviewee has completely answered a question, and then ask the students, "Would the oral history be

enriched by additional information on this point or did the interviewee answer this question in a satisfactory manner?"

Finally, before encouraging the students to conduct oral histories on their own, it is vitally significant to reiterate and impress upon them that during their interview they will be receiving only one point of view. It is crucial to stress that the information, ideas, and opinions one gleans in a single interview/oral history presents and represents a single point of view among the diverse set of opinions or ideas that are inherent in and/or surround a complex social issue. Thus, if students wish to obtain as complete a picture as possible of an issue, they will need to interview a number of people who hold different, including conflicting, points of view, and who have had various kinds of experiences with the issue at hand. At this time it is also useful to stress that oral histories will only provide limited information on a topic or issue, and that a comprehensive view of the topic or issue will require further study, particularly of other resource materials.

When students are ready to conduct oral histories on their own, they may approach the project in at least two ways. They can either seek out interviewees on their own and conduct the oral histories outside of the school setting, or the teacher and the students can conduct the oral histories during class time. Initially, it seems to be worth easing the student into the process by using the latter system first and then progressing to the former.

When the interviewees are invited to class, the teacher and students can make a concerted effort to bring in individuals who hold various points of view and different beliefs. That way, as different students complete their oral histories the class can listen to and discuss a wide array of ideas. The latter situation is a must when dealing with social issues in the classroom; and by doing so, it will prevent the student from unwanted bias.

Locating Interviewees

How can teachers and students locate willing individuals to interview on various social issues? Having conducted over 200 oral histories in various hamlets, towns, and cities across the United States, I have discovered that any locale can be tapped as an oral history treasure chest. The local historical society is an excellent place to begin the search for such individuals. Other promising sources are articles in local newspapers about locally involved citizens; nearby colleges and universities; and national organizations that have local chapters (e.g., veteran groups such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) or the American Legion; the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU); the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Daughters of the American Revolution; the Eagle Forum; Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR); National Organization for Women (NOW); Amnesty International (AI); Greenpeace; the Hunger Project; the Gray Panthers; Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR); Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR); the Moral Majority; American Friends Service Committee (AFSC); Federation of American Scientists; and Common Cause). These organizations and others often know of individuals who have worked on

social issues and have interesting stories to tell, and will frequently put you in touch with them.

Conclusions

As students conduct and collect oral histories, there is no better way to acknowledge their hard work than to organize and maintain an oral history library at the school. This is easy to do and it pays immense and wide-ranging dividends. All that is needed is a safe and readily accessible place to keep the tapes and transcripts produced by former and current students to introduce future students to the study of social issues through the use of oral histories. Students can also use the tapes and transcripts to guide their own efforts. Finally, the tapes and transcripts can be made available to teachers in the same and/or other subject areas for use in their classrooms.

By addressing various social issues through the use of oral histories, teachers will not only be turning the "null curriculum" into the explicit curriculum but they will be helping students improve their understanding of the world they live in. At the same time, the curriculum will come alive for students and be imbued with a certain relevance that is missing from too many classrooms today.

NOTES

1. Willa K. Baum. *Oral History for the Local History Society*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1971, p. 1.

2. Harold Rugg. "A Study in Censorship: Good Concepts and Bad Words." *Social Education*, March 1941, pp. 176-181.

3. Elliot Eisner. *The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1979, p. 83.

4. For those teachers who are not familiar with the proper procedure, see the reference section for a list of those texts that outline the procedures.

APPENDIX

Selected Oral History Testimonials

On December 7 we had just come home from church, and we heard it over the radio. Of course, everything goes through your mind. Now what? We're Japanese; I wonder how the neighbors feel toward us.

. . . When we first realized that an evacuation would take place, it was a depressing feeling that's hard to explain to you. . . . One thing that upset me, that was hard to take, was that we had this German family right next door, and they were as German as German could be, and they were free, they could do anything they wanted and nothing was bothering them. Why us? I felt like we were just being punished for nothing. It's something very, very difficult to explain.

From "Emi Somekawa" in John Tateishi's *And Justice for All: An Oral History of the Japanese American Detention Camps* (New York: Random House, 1984), pp. 146-147.

At night, when the Khmer Rouge would call people's names and take them away, we knew that they were dead. But we did not want to accept that as reality. Even though we had fear, if we had seen it with our own eyes, we would have responded differently. We just couldn't accept it as being real. . .

We had changed from people who were intellectual, who used to think independently, into part of the Angkar's "populace." You became humiliated, allowed to live only as a slave. . .

At mealtime, the Khmer Rogue would consider who worked. They gave you just a little bit—a spoonful—more rice. And in the fields we could try to catch crabs and pick wild vegetables along the paddy ditch. That filled our stomachs a little bit.

From "House of Donuts: Celia Vann Noup, Refugee from Cambodia" in Al Santoli's *New Americans: An Oral History* (New York: Viking, 1988), pp. 218, 223.

Of course, many women I knew didn't believe in suffrage, either. An awful lot violently disapproved. They thought it a lot of nonsense. I didn't happen to number among my friends any ardent anti-suffragists who did anything about it. Most of them were just plain indifferent and thought it was a great waste of time, that it would just all be the same. And, you know, oddly enough, they anticipated what really happened. Most of my friends said, 'This isn't going to make any difference; they're all going to vote the way their fathers and their husbands do anyway.' You see, that was the burden of their song. As it happened, that's just about the way it turned out, unhappily.

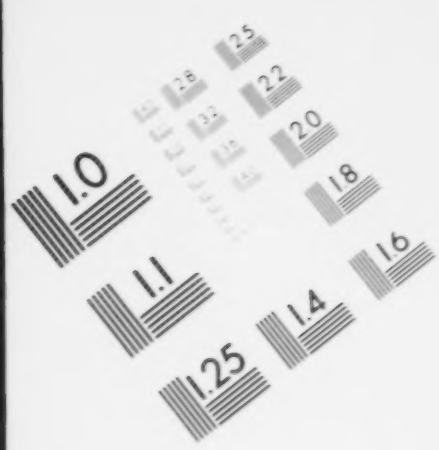
From "Laura Ellsworth Seiler" in Sherna Gluck's *From Parlor to Prison: Five American Suffragists Talk About Their Lives* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), p. 214.

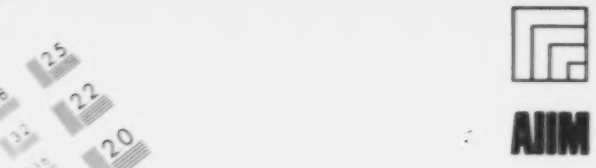
My master was named Tom Asbie, a meaner man was never born in Virginia—brutal, wicked, and hard. He always carried a cowhide with him. If he saw anyone doing something that did not suit his taste, he would have the slave tied to a tree, man or woman, and then would cowhide the victim until he got tired, or sometimes the slave would faint.

I have heard it said by people in authority, Tom Ashbie owned nine thousand acres of farm land. . . He was a large slave owner, having more than a hundred slaves. . . They were awakened by blowing of the horn before sunrise by the overseer, started work at sunrise and worked all day to sundown, with no time to go to the cabin for dinner. You carried your dinner with you. The slaves were driven at top speed and whipped at the snap of the finger by the overseers. We had four overseers on the farm, all hired white men. I have seen men beaten until they dropped in their tracks; or knocked over by clubs; women stripped down to their waist and cowhided.

"Silas Jackson" in *Life Under the "Peculiar Institution": Selections from the Slave Narrative Collection* edited by Norman R. Yetman (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), pp. 176-177.

Most of the dead were burned at the center of Hiroshima City. Soldiers brought the bodies in by the wheelbarrow load; it was just a big burning factory in open





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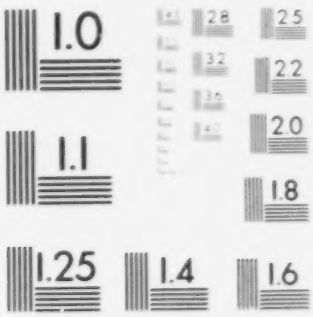

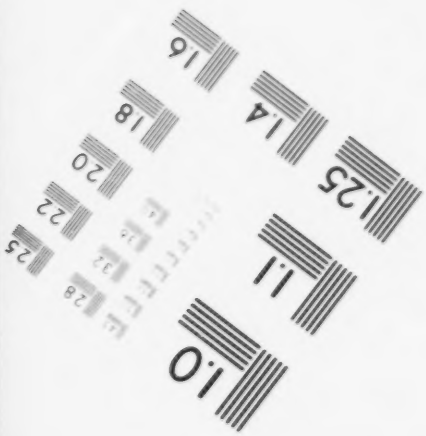

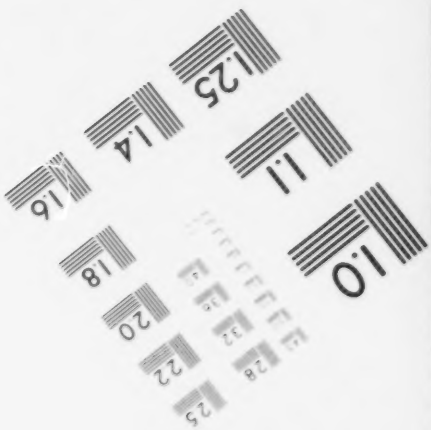

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ground. After the war ended, the soldiers immediately went home and left us to finish. You can still find a lot of human bone in Hiroshima because we had to cremate all over the place. And in some places, there were no bodies at all, but just the shadows of bodies on the walls and steps. This was where a person was vaporized by the flash, leaving just a shadow burned into the brick.

From "Kanji Kuramoto" in Sam Totten's *Facing the Danger: Interviews With 20 Anti-Nuclear Activists* (Trumansburg, New York: The Crossing Press, 1984), p. 78.

When we got there the infamous Dr. Mengele made his selection—what for, I didn't know. . . I remember the big sign that said "Arbeit Macht Frei," which means "Work makes you free." And there was an orchestra playing Bach when we went to the barrack where they shaved our heads and took our clothes. I had some doctor's tools—I thought I could practice medicine—but everything was taken. They tattooed my forearm and made us take a cold shower and gave us the striped clothing and wooden shoes.

Suddenly everything was different. We went to the barrack. It was very cold. There was a smell of burning flesh and somebody said, "That's people they're burning." I was ready to slap him. "Let's not crack up," I said. I thought he was crazy. We saw the flames, we smelled the flesh burning, but our minds couldn't realize anything that awful.

From "Life During the Holocaust" in Sylvia Rothchild's *Voices From the Holocaust* (New York: New American Library, 1981), p. 168.

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EXPLORING REAL WORLD ISSUES

BE PREPARED

Using Controversial Topics or Methods in the Classroom

John Zola

A quick quiz: What do the following have in common: vegetarianism, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, nontraditional role models, occultism, and secular humanism? The answer: each has been the focal point of a challenge to either content or methods used in public school classrooms. These challenges have set parents or community members against schools and educators in hopes of bringing about a change in content or methodology. Emotions run high as conflicting interests and educational philosophies meet head on. While these are not the only form of challenge to schooling, they are often the most rancorous and hold the greatest potential for polarizing a school or community. This article presents a brief rationale for the use of controversial topics and strategies and then focuses on a list of steps for either preventing a confrontation or dealing with one once it occurs.

The challenges facing public school teachers are great, and even more so when dealing with potentially controversial issues. The goals of education within a democracy must be continually balanced with divergent needs and values of parents and the community. For example, there is an increasingly broad consensus that schools should help students better understand the global or international context within which the U.S. now exists. Some in the community may view such education as potentially anti-American, inherently biased, and inappropriate in public school classrooms. A delicate balancing act presents itself. As such, several principles should underlie the teaching of controversial issues or the use of potentially controversial methodologies:

1. Public schools exist to educate an increasingly diverse population of students who are increasingly aware of complex issues at, and beyond, their local community. The media, from movies to MTV, is filled with portrayals of terrorism, abortion demonstrators, sexual abuse, apartheid, human suffering and other "real life" concerns.

2. Teachers have a responsibility to teach this divergent population of students about the complex and contested issues that face our society. As such, challenges to content or methodologies are likely to arise.

3. Parent involvement in education can be a positive force for growth on the part of the teacher and child. Parent involvement can take the form of parent-teacher conferences, guest speakers, volunteer help, committee work, as well as challenges to content or strategies.

4. Parental involvement in schools is to be encouraged because public schools exist to educate *their* children. However, this involvement cannot be allowed to disrupt the legitimate rights of other students to receive a quality education nor to interfere with the rights of teachers to make professional decisions regarding access to, and the reflective consideration of, significant issues and points of view.

Given the potential for challenges, a teacher might ask, "Why teach controversial issues when there are so many other important aspects to address in the school curriculum?" In fact, the use of controversial issues and strategies could well increase the likelihood of parental pressure, administrative sanction, and stress. With studies showing the teaching profession reeling under a variety of stresses and pressure, to self-impose one more might seem ill-advised. The rationale for addressing controversial issues and strategies lies in the maintenance of a successful participatory democracy. Citizens in a representative democracy elect those who make rules and establish policies for the society as a whole. These elections depend on an electorate that is informed on a variety of issues, including those that might be seen as controversial.

Citizens must be informed to cogently consider the difficult issues that affect them both personally and societally. National security, welfare reform, and Supreme Court appointments are only a few of the many topics that contain the seeds of controversy about which citizens should be informed. Listening to advocacy positions and identifying personal value positions are two of the skills used by involved citizens. Though difficult, teachers have a responsibility to teach about such issues and to provide such skill development. The teaching of controversial issues can be taught in a manner that supports these goals, and at the same time minimizes the risk of challenges from parents or the community.

Controversial issues are inherently transitory because society's values, mores, attitudes, knowledge, and technology are constantly changing. It is the shifting nature of controversial issues that makes the teaching of them so important. Once, women's sufferage and slavery were hotly contested issues. Now, they are interesting, but noncontested, historical issues. In recent years, the nuclear freeze was an issue on the "front burner"; now it has been replaced with other national security concerns. We may not know what the particular controversial topics of the next decade or generation will be, but we can be certain that controversial issues will exist. Thus, it is the **process** of confronting controversy that is the critical attribute of teaching about controversial topics.

Students will only learn this process by dealing with current "hot" topics which are filled with emotion, polarization, and challenge. The teaching of historical controversial topics such as the Boston Massacre or the Flint Sit-down Strikes, while important, cannot duplicate the process for dealing with current controversy. Insulation from the contested issues of the day in no way makes those issues go away, nor does it prepare students to be future decision makers and citizens.

Of late, not only topics have been considered controversial. A variety of strategies have also been challenged as controversial including: "guided imagery," debates, journal writing, moral dilemmas, family histories, role-playing, autobiographies, and open-ended discussions. Such strategies, it is alleged, are invasive and undermine personal family values. *Used appropriately,* these strategies can be highly motivational, help facilitate the higher level thinking skills our society claims to so value for its future citizens, and should never be a means of inculcating nor impugning a particular value position. The methods listed above ask students to move beyond rote memorization to meaningfully interact with content, issues, and one another. Not intended to be invasions of private moral or ethical structures, these strategies help students consider the multiplicity of viewpoints that exist in a democracy. These more innovative strategies can help teachers connect the world and experiences of the learner with content being taught.

Thus, teachers have a professional responsibility to teach controversial issues and select appropriate instructional strategies. This being said, challenges to teacher decisions may still arise. Careful preparation in advance of teaching controversial topics or the use of innovative strategies can help such challenges to be resolved quickly and satisfactorily. Following are guidelines that should be considered prior to a challenge, as well as once a challenge has arisen.

Prior to a Challenge:

1. Determine the existence and characteristics of district policies regarding controversial topics/strategies and parental challenges to them. Policies should ensure access to diverse ideas and points of view, provide for reasoned strategies in the selection of learning materials, and precisely outline parent, teacher, administration, and student rights and responsibilities in the event of a challenge. If policies do not exist in a district, promote the adoption of them. Sample policies can be obtained from the American Library Association and various professional organizations such as the National Council for the Social Studies and National Council of Teachers of English.

2. Ensure that materials or strategies are age appropriate and consistent with course goals and district guidelines for the particular course or content area. Provide materials that fairly represent various viewpoints on a potentially controversial topic. Consider alternative assignments, as appropriate, when teaching controversial topics or using potentially controversial teaching

strategies. For example, students may have a choice between conducting a family interview and writing about a mythical family.

3. Maintain open lines of communication with building administrators and content area supervisors regarding choices of topics and teaching strategies. Principals will often have the first contact with individuals who challenge a teacher's judgment and they deserve to know, in advance, your goals and reasons for the choices you make.

4. Take advantage of training opportunities regarding the teaching of controversial issues and the use of "alternative" teaching strategies. Such training should include information on legal rights of teachers and parents and appropriate ways of using potentially controversial strategies and materials. A variety of professional organizations conduct such trainings around the country, including Educators For Social Responsibility, Phi Delta Kappa, and the National Education Association.

5. Develop and use clear procedures for the adoption of curricular materials and for the purchase and use of supplemental materials. These procedures are often included in school board policies and should provide for meaningful input of parents, community members, teachers, administrators, and other members of the professional staff. Such procedures help to ensure careful selection of materials and can build a community-based constituency for adopted materials should they later come under challenge.

6. Share, on a regular basis, your educational goals and program with parents through the use of letters home and by encouraging students to take class topics home to discuss with parents. Parents want to be informed about their child's educational experiences and find it easier to be supportive when they are knowledgeable about course topics and activities. Charges of indoctrination, should they arise, are difficult to uphold if there has been active and open communication between home and school.

7. Establish policies and guidelines for parental visits to observe teachers. Though parents have a near automatic right to visit classrooms, such visits should not be allowed to disrupt the educational process. Consider, in advance, what might constitute a "disruption" and how it will be handled. If demands for materials and reproductions become excessive, ask that parents review those materials at school and that the parents cover the cost of reproduction. Consider whether any community member, or just parents, will have access to classrooms.

8. Build and nurture the constituency in the community that supports the broad goals of civic education inherent in the teaching of many potentially controversial topics. Develop relationships with church and community leaders and seek their input as decisions are made regarding educational goals and objectives. Volunteer to share the goals of civic education at church meetings and with civic groups such as the Rotary, Lions, and Kiwanis.

9. Become informed about the local and national groups that are orchestrating many of the challenges to public education. Get on their mailing lists, seek their information, and attend their meetings. Seek to understand the world view of these groups. Determine whether a challenge is coming from a local group of concerned parents alone, or from a group with a defined political agenda for the public schools.

After a Challenge Has Been Raised:
Despite well reasoned policies, carefully selected materials, and open lines of communication, challenges may still arise to a particular unit, topic, or class activity. If carefully established policies are in place and followed, the needs of both the school and challenging party can be addressed in a reasoned fashion. The following suggestions are intended to provide guidance to educators as they work through a challenge to their professional judgment and expertise.

1. Follow district policies. They are the best insurance that all parties will be heard and that the outcome will reflect the best interests of students and the learning process.

2. Work, as much as possible, to resolve the challenge at the lowest level. Determine if alternatives exist for enrollment in a different section or if appropriate alternative assignments can be provided. Emphasize your intention to meet the needs of the particular parent without infringing on the legitimate rights of the other students.

3. Always have someone accompany you to any meeting with the party that has raised the challenge. Take a tape recorder so that an accurate record can be made of what was said and done.

4. Be available to talk with community groups regarding the challenge. Be prepared to explain the position of the district and to listen to concerns. Do not hope that the controversy will go away. Inaction or excessive silence is often taken as a tacit admission of guilt or wrong-doing. Address the issues in the open and in a clear and forthright manner.

5. Treat those who raise the challenge with utmost respect and courtesy. Schools must model appropriate behaviors for resolving controversy for open communication on tough issues. When you are wrong, admit it and move ahead. If necessary, agree to disagree when common ground cannot be reached.

6. Insist that charges be made specific. Ask for specific classroom incidents and that quotations from challenged materials be provided in context. Insist that charges be made in writing or as provided for in district policies.

7. Keep the media informed as to the challenge and the process for resolving it. Designate an individual to be continually available to answer questions and respond to concerns raised by the press. Newspapers often find these issues compelling to cover in great detail. It is difficult for a community to resolve such issues if they are played out in the media via half-truths and innuendos.

8. Provide support for colleagues. Challenges can be emotionally and physically draining.

Teachers have a responsibility to prepare students to confront the complex and often polarizing issues facing our society. Careful preparation and planning can enable such learning to take place, regardless of the challenges some might raise. If controversial issues are addressed in an open and balanced manner and if students are taught to understand divergent viewpoints, the goals of education for democratic participation can best be met. Should a challenge arise, steps can be taken to ensure that all parties are treated with respect and dignity and that the ultimate outcome centers on the best interests of students.

ADDENDA

1. Organizations that have expertise in addressing challenges and that can be turned to for advice include:

The American Association for School Administrators (AASP)
1801 N. Moore St.
Arlington, VA 22207

The American Library Assocation (ALA)
Office of Intellectual Freedom
50 E. Huron
Chicago, IL 60611

The International Reading Association (IRA)
800 Barksdale Rd.
P.O. Box 8139
Newark, DE 19714

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)
1111 Kenyon Rd.
Urbana, IL 61801

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)
3501 Newark St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20016

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TEACHING FOR NEW WAYS OF THINKING

The ESR-Soviet Education Project

Larry Dieringer

ESR's Soviet Education Project was established in 1985 by ESR's Founding President, Roberta Snow. For the last five years, ESR teachers have explored and developed thinking and problem-solving processes to help the next generation move beyond the mutual antagonism and enmity that has existed for more than half a century between the United States and the Soviet Union. ESR's underlying assumption is that the two countries must peacefully co-exist and work together on shared problems in the context of deeply rooted cultural and historical differences.

One of the fruits of the era of *glasnost* and *perestroika* is the possibility for U.S. and Soviet teachers to work together. Over forty U.S. and Soviet educators spent two weeks of August, 1988, together at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. They participated in "Educating for New Ways of Thinking," an institute co-sponsored by Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) and the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. The institute at Hampshire College was the first of its kind. Its purpose was to make recommendations to improve the ways in which Americans and Soviets teach about each other's country.

In August, 1989, a second collaborative institute in Leningrad focused on "Teaching for Critical Thinking in the Nuclear Age." Plans for continued joint work include a third institute addressing "Teaching for Social Responsibility," month-long exchanges of teachers and administrators committed to democratic classrooms and schools, and a research project.

Hampshire institute participants spent two weeks exploring a range of pedagogical issues: teaching for democratic participation; ideas for responding to faulty assumptions and stereotypes held about each other; thinking processes for examining controversial issues like human rights; methods for understanding different points of view on emotionally held topics; and ways to inspire a desire among students to learn more about each other. Discussions led to fundamental

questions of knowing and acting, structuring schools and dealing with differences.

In September, 1988, these educators returned to their schools. All shared a commitment to teach for the ways of thinking, understanding and problem-solving which they had explored and developed during their time together. Working together did not end on the last day of the institute. Each participant brought the spirit, questions and exploration of "educating for new ways of thinking" back to their respective classrooms and schools.

Democratic Process

Two years ago, a school principal helped establish a council in his school. The council, comprised of thirty representatives each from the students, teachers and parents, had wide-ranging power to make decisions on critical issues of school life. Further, when the council was created, the principal declined suggestions that he have any veto power over decisions and that he be chief of the council. A progressive principal whose school is at the leading edge of the school reform movement? Yes, but the principal is Sasha Bannov, the school is #130, Novosibirsk, Siberia, and the reform is one manifestation of *perestroika* in the Soviet Union.

For Soviet educators, an important purpose in participating in the Hampshire institute was "to prepare the next generation in our country to be able to think independently and to engage in more effective dialogue in order to overcome the obstacles that still exist between our countries and to address the problems of Soviet society," said Gregory Dmitriyev, senior educational researcher at the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences and one of the leaders of the institute. "Perhaps the main purpose is for Soviet educators to learn the skills of democracy."

In its short history, the school council in Novosibirsk had considered issues such as whether all students should wear uniforms (they decided uniforms were not obligatory); whether to reduce the school week to five days for elementary students (they voted yes); and whether teachers can send students out of the classroom for bad behavior (they voted yes, on the strength of student opinion and against the wishes of the principal).

Despite this extraordinary structural commitment to the empowerment of the different school constituencies, it was not working in at least one important way. "Our children are not adequately prepared to participate in a democratic process," claims Bannov. "They have difficulty expressing and formulating their needs. Also, they feel dominated and not respected by the adults. They have great difficulty participating in the school council."

After his experience at Hampshire, Bannov tried something new. He chose ten of the student council representatives and worked with them on issues related to their involvement. They role-played parent, teacher, and student representatives considering different topics. In this safe environment, they took the time to more deeply imagine and understand differing perspectives, to listen carefully, to seek common ground. In one exercise they

listed possible solutions to a problem on a chalkboard. They erased from the board suggestions they couldn't live with, but had to leave on the board a minimum of two ideas from each group. When asked, "Can you make a decision based on this proposal?", increasingly, they found that they could.

These students were prepared for their next council meeting. They started looking for two or three points from teachers and parents that they could agree with. Bannov noted that "our work together seemed to have impact beyond the council. These students seemed to be able to listen better in a variety of school settings."

How Do We Know What We Know?

On August 31, 1988, the first full day of school at the Indian Hill School in Flint, Michigan, Vicki Weiss asked her 5th grade students a very open-ended question: "What do you know or have you heard about the Soviet Union?" The question was the beginning of a year-long focus on the Soviet Union in Vicki's class. Student responses reflected a mix of bits and pieces of information, misinformation, stereotypes, concerns and some understanding of the changing nature of the relationship between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The range of comments included: "It's a communist country"; "Everyone wants to get away and be free"; "They have no buildings there"; "If there's a nuclear war, we could blow each other up"; "We're starting to get along better, understand more."

Early in the year, Vicki helped her students look at how they currently get the information with which they form opinions and understanding, and how they can broaden their sources of information. In an early lesson, Vicki brought to class a "Soviet Source Box" filled with material to help learn about the Soviet Union. Students guessed what was in the box, and compared their list of guesses with what was actually in the box. They examined the source materials and discussed the kinds of resources that would best help them answer questions they had.

The children's guesses did not include any Soviet sources of information, but inside the box they found books written by Soviets and other cultural artifacts. This activity extended their range of thinking about different points of view and sources of information. Such learning is an important precursor to more complex, critical analysis of information that students develop when they are older.

Susan Jones, formerly a 4th grade teacher in Brookline, Massachusetts, and now a teacher at the Anglo-American school in Moscow, also begins her teaching about the U.S.S.R. by asking students what they know, wonder or think about the Soviet Union. The beginning topic might also be a question such as "What do you know about Soviet people?", or a word or name, like "Gorbachev." The class brainstorms ideas and Susan records their responses by constructing a web chart on newsprint. As soon as undefined words, vague concepts and unanswered questions begin to emerge, Susan starts a separate list of "things to find out more about." For homework, students are asked to gather

more information about either the original topic or new questions that emerged by interviewing family and friends. The class then shares what they find out.

The method works well with any controversial issue. Students learn valuable lessons along the way. They take significant responsibility for their own learning. They pose the questions and do the actual work of finding information. They learn that there are many points of view on an issue. They must make up their own mind about what they believe.

If we are to think clearly and make informed judgments about the Soviet Union, we must develop an awareness of how we form the assumptions we hold, and the relationship between these assumptions and our sources of information. Historically, getting good information and deciding what one thinks about the Soviet Union has been fraught with problems. Secrecy in the Soviet Union, stereotypical media images in the U.S., and polarized opinions all helped to make forming an accurate and reasonable picture of the U.S.S.R. and U.S.-Soviet relations a difficult process. Though much more information about life in the Soviet Union is available now compared to several years ago, and cold war rhetoric is receding, there is much evidence that underlying assumptions are deep-seated, created over long periods of time, and resistant to new information. Understanding the nature of one's own bias is crucial to making thoughtful judgments.

At a St. Paul, Minnesota, ESR summer institute for middle and high school teachers on "Teaching About the Soviet Union," participants take part in an introductory exercise called "American meets Soviet," developed by Roberta Snow. Working in pairs, one person plays a Soviet and the other person plays an American interviewing the Soviet. After several minutes to prepare their roles and a fifteen minute interview, participants are asked to reflect on what they have asked and said. Considering why one chose to ask certain questions, how those questions might differ if interviewing someone from another country, where the "Soviet" got her information, and what questions couldn't be answered, all help participants begin to examine their own assumptions.

Diane Pearson, a social science instructor at Minneapolis Community College, and one of the leaders of the St. Paul institute says that "when we become critical thinkers, the most basic task we learn to master is an ability to recognize assumptions under which we and others think and act, to understand the social origin of these assumptions, and to evaluate the validity and accuracy of these assumptions. As part of this process we learn to apply attention to the context in which actions and ideas are generated and thus to understand the diverse and emergent quality of 'truth.' We also become open to alternative ways of looking at and behaving in the world as we synthesize our own new reflective judgments and interpretations into commitments which guide our actions in the world. In short, critical thinking leads us to examine such basics as 'What is truth?' 'What is authority?' 'What is evidence?' 'How do I know what I know?' "

Complicating Thinking

For many of the U.S. participants, actually getting to know Soviet citizens was a

significant step in developing a more complex understanding of the Soviet Union. Diane Pearson has taught about the Soviet Union and world issues for a long time. She considers herself knowledgeable about the Soviet Union. Looking back, Diane is surprised at the impact the institute had for her. "We have been so isolated from the Soviets. Suddenly, here were real live human beings. The contact was more powerful because we were brought up to know these people as our 'enemies.' Deep down a part of us wonders if this is true. With no contact, it had been hard to sort this out."

Carol Reid a resource teacher for the gifted and talented from Charlotte, North Carolina, walked into the institute with a set of assumptions reflecting her own stereotypes. "Everyone will spout the party line. There will be KGB supervision. No one will speak freely. They will not challenge their past." Within days, her assumptions were shattered.

Carol says, "moving beyond stereotypes is the essence of studying about anyone, anywhere in the world. The process of having a stereotype broken leads to the development of a questioning attitude, to asking and seeking to understand what reality *really* is. Then, in turn, you need to examine your own assumptions and perceptions, and the culture that helps form these. This is what we need to help our students experience."

Inevitably, teachers who've spent time with Soviets or traveled to the Soviet Union become "resources" and "authorities" whose stories offer insights into Soviet society. Yet, these teachers face tough choices in trying to present a multidimensional picture, true to the nuances and paradoxes of contemporary life in the Soviet Union. They ask, "How do I talk about the things that aren't working, the problems Soviets face, without deepening existing stereotypes around some of these topics?" Carol Reid tries to tell her students "lots of things that don't fit one neat story. For instance, I tell the story of not being able to find a place to eat or to find food in the middle of Leningrad and then talk about having lots of wonderful food served in the home I visited."

Knowing the importance to her own understanding of getting to know Soviets, Diane Pearson claims that one of the largest challenges is teaching for complex understanding when her students have *no* contact with Soviet people. One of the central strategies for complicating thinking about the Soviet Union is to introduce multiple perspectives. Diane introduces the voices of Soviets, and sometimes fictional characters from Soviet literature, when considering any question or issue. She created a "voice document" from a first draft of writing from one of her Soviet colleagues at the Hampshire institute about "new thinking in the Soviet Union." She uses it in her classes as one means to hear the perspective of a Soviet who is not a government official about contemporary Soviet issues.

Diane helps her students extend their ability to understand different perspectives through an activity called "Critical Incidents of Facts." In this activity, scenarios or generally agreed upon facts are described and students are asked to come up with at least two different interpretations of the scene or facts. They are also asked to consider how American and Soviet interpretations of the

scenes or facts might differ. For example, "a generally agreed upon fact is that around 20 million (out of 190 million) Soviets died in World War II. What can we conclude from this about Soviet attitudes toward conventional or nuclear war? (Interpretation #1 — Soviets would do anything to keep the peace since they know by personal suffering what war means. Interpretation #2 — The experience of so many losses has hardened Soviets to the effects of war.) Other examples include: "Pictures and statues of Lenin are to be found everywhere in the Soviet Union"; and "Once people apply to leave the Soviet Union, they are often shunned and discriminated against by others."

Janina Krakova has taught English to 10th graders for thirteen years at School #29 in Moscow. She experiments with a variety of techniques learned at the institute for developing critical thinking skills among her students. Janina helps her students examine controversial issues. For example, her students explored the question of whether or not books, plays and films should be censored. Small groups took a position on the issue and developed their arguments. Groups present positions and then arguments and counter-arguments are listed. Each group must find places where they can agree with counter-arguments and note the most significant disagreements. After further discussion, the class is referred to readings to further help them reach informed decisions about the issue.

Janina notes other ways in which the institute affected her teaching: she models greater tolerance of controversial opinions; her existing commitment to small group work and cooperative learning techniques such as "jig-saw" were strengthened; she has incorporated the "believing exercise" (see below) into her teaching to help students more deeply understand other points of view; she can better help her students listen without interrupting and has a better sense of "the culture of a good discussion."

Understanding Different Perspectives

The practice of "methodological belief," first developed by Peter Elbow, an English professor and author of *Embracing Contraries*, adds a dimension to examining different perspectives. Students are asked to suspend judgment and through a disciplined conscious effort, step into another point of view. The purpose is to develop empathy, and to expand one's own perspective by understanding how others see and experience an issue. The exercise is most difficult when the point of view is in some way opposed to something one believes strongly.

ESR teaches methodological belief as part of the critical thinking process. After "believing" a perspective as fully as possible, students critique or "doubt" that point of view, looking for flaws in reasoning, inaccuracies, places of disagreement, etc. The process of making a decsion involves synthesizing "believing" and "doubting."

Bob Maher, a 4th grade teacher in Athens, Ohio, and a member of the ESR committee that forged the Soviet Education Project, illustrates the effect of the "believing exercise" on his own thinking about teaching controversial issues.

Two years ago when I taught a unit on the Soviet Union, I responded to a girl's questions and concerns about arms control by providing information and sharing my opinion. I think it is appropriate, when discussing the arms race and/or Cold War, that students can see adults taking positive steps toward peace. I told the students that I was glad (notice how my own opinion/feelings slip in here) these events were taking place and that the real enemy was nuclear weapons because of their destructive capabilities, not the Soviet people, whom we (the class) now knew shared a common humanity from the unit we were just concluding. I remember holding this viewpoint very passionately and that a solitary boy did not think peace would be advanced by negotiating with the Soviets and that we were merely deluding ourselves to think that we were making progress (a common belief in the area). I remember seeing the boy's reaction during my short talk (shaking his head "no") and being displeased by it but also vaguely uncomfortable at the outcome of the lesson in terms of not establishing more of a dialogue on this point.

Two years later when I began my unit on the Soviet Union two boys began making assertions about the Soviet Union which concerned records of treaty violations, desire for world domination, military spending, conspiracy, etc. I remember trying to look for pieces I could agree with in what they were saying and trying to assess the emotions behind their statements. I said, "Some people, but not all people, believe what you are saying is right." I also tried to point out the piece I could agree with to them, and asserted that a lot of people agreed with them on that particular point. I decided not to interject my own beliefs but instead have a discussion at a later time when more information had been identified. I felt good about the decision but still felt a little frustrated not having had a chance to "set them straight" or "correct" them in front of the large group "audience." I'm still not sure if either action was correct or incorrect because issues of bias are so complicated.

Teachers from the Hampshire Institute employ "methodological belief" as part of developing students' critical thinking abilities. Peggy Sheehan team-teaches Soviet Studies for seniors at New Milford High School in Connecticut. She and her colleague practice believing in a historical context with characters such as Peter the Great and Ivan the Terrible. For example, the class spends time believing that Peter's impact on Russia was destructive. They also work with more current issues such as socialism and capitalism. Peggy says that "initially students don't know how to believe. They are incredulous. 'How can we believe something we don't believe?!!' But then they find some little piece which they can identify with and the practice becomes easier."

Bob Brown, a high school social studies teacher in Southington, Connecticut, uses the believing exercise to explore the concept of economic rights. During the first day, the concept of economic rights is considered, examples are cited, and students practice "believing" as fully as possible that

economic rights are human rights like the political rights put forth in the U.S. Bill of Rights. On the first day, economic rights are not presented in the context of the Soviet Union. On the second day Bob describes the Soviet Union's belief in economic rights and the implications for political choices. Students are asked to compare their thoughts and feelings of the first day to their reactions when talking about the Soviet context. Bob claims that believing helps his students to avoid painting things in black and white. Often, students will comment that "they had never looked at that perspective."

Personal Connections

Many of the summer institute participants established pen pal relationships between the students in their respective countries. Pen pal letters seem to play a powerful role in helping to cultivate students' desires for more information and lead to deeper understanding. Some ESR educators have expressed concern that pen pal exchanges lead to a "they're just like us" way of thinking, thus simplifying, not complicating, understanding. To some extent, this may be true. Student comments usually focus on commonalties and shared interests: "I thought they'd look different. My pen pal looks just like me"; "My pen pal likes the same things—chewing gum, watching T.V., reading books." But the recognition of similarities, which is frequently a deep shock, and the reality of a direct connection with a Soviet student, seem vital to both affective and intellectual shifts among U.S. students.

Carol Reid suggests that "it takes time to move beyond the 'they're just like us' orientation, and it may not happen in a few letter exchanges. On the other hand, the pen pal relationship and the exchange of other items besides letters keeps the children interested in seeking more and more information about the Soviet Union, whereas good teaching alone will not." Bob Brown encourages his students to ask difficult questions, especially in their second and third letters. The answers to questions about things like freedom of expression (more debate than expected) and travel (many citizens travel to different parts of the Soviet Union) are different than expected.

Developing personal and working relationships with Soviet educators serves not only to crack one's own embedded stereotypes and deepen understanding, but also to provide a rich well-spring of continual inspiration. "I've just been to my mailbox and opened another letter from Irina Turkina," says Carol Reid. "How can I express the joy of knowing that bonds have been established with people in the mysterious land of my cold war childhood? Every time there is a letter, a package, a telephone call, it is a catharsis; it is a small miracle." Bob Brown adds, "When you talk about Siberia, you're talking about a place where my friend lives."

CHALLENGES IN THE ESR-SOVIET COLLABORATION

Alan Shapiro

"'Challenge'? What is this word 'challenge'?" Tanya wants to know as we walk together after the first session of the first institute sponsored by Educators for Social Responsibility and the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences.

In that session we Americans have used the word in sentences like "Our challenge is to work together frankly but in an atmosphere free from accusation and defensiveness." I try to explain that by "challenge" in such sentences we mean something like "provocative task" or "stimulating problem."

Tanya's English is good enough for us to converse, but not always easily. My Russian is confined to phrases like *do svidanya*. She listens to my explanation intently. When I finish she seems satisfied, but I am not sure how much she understands.

Why are Tanya and I discussing challenges here at Hampshire College in August, 1988? The reasons may be traced to an earlier time in the 1980's, not long after ESR was organized largely over concerns about the nuclear arms race and its impact on children. At their early meetings with teachers and other interested adults, ESR leaders found themselves frequently confronted with the question, "What about the Russians?" For in discussions of nuclear age programs, participants inevitably wanted to know how they would deal with the Soviet Union and its relations with the United States. ESR did not have an answer to the question.

The result was the formation of a "Soviet Working Group" under the leadership of Roberta Snow, also the founding president of ESR. Its tasks were to educate itself about the Soviet Union; to examine the problems associated with teaching about that country; to develop teaching strategies and professional development programs; and to produce materials that would foster a fuller, more accurate understanding of the USSR.

In its approach to these tasks the group acted on the assumptions that 1) despite profound differences in social systems and decades of cold war disputes, the United States and the Soviet Union had to resolve their conflicts peacefully or risk mutual annihilation and that 2) ESR could contribute to this process by helping students and teachers confront the enemy image many had of the Soviet Union and complicate their thinking about that country.

A logical extension of the project came in the summer of 1985 when ESR's director and associate director, Tony Wagner and Susan Alexander, introduced themselves in Moscow to staff members of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. The result was an exchange of delegations and a "Memorandum of Cooperation" signed in the fall of 1987 between ESR and the USSR Ministry of Education and the Academy. Since that time the collaboration has focused on learning from and on improving the ways we teach about each other. A further purpose has been to support *glasnost* and *perestroika*.

During the past two years the collaboration has produced: two two-week institutes, the first at Hampshire College in Massachusetts on "Educating for New Ways of Thinking," the second at Repino, near Leningrad, on "Teaching for Critical Thinking in the Nuclear Age," each including about 50 American and Soviet participants; draft curriculum materials in such areas as getting accurate information about each other, human rights and Afghanistan; exchanges of articles for each other's publications; videotapes on the Hampshire Institute, "A Day at School in Washington DC" (for Soviet audiences), and the lives of an American and of a Soviet teen-ager (with Churchill Films); exchanges of artwork, letters and audio and video tapes between ESR and Soviet teachers; the visit to the Soviet Union of students from two classes of ESR teachers; an exchange program between an ESR teacher and her students at the Anglo-American School in Moscow and a Soviet teacher and her students in a Moscow suburb; an infusion into a number of ESR and Soviet classrooms of methodologies and content drawn from the two institutes and the exchanges.

The collaboration has also challenged Americans and Soviets to examine our behavior and to confront hard questions. ESR, for example, emphasizes the processes of participatory democracy as significant means to transform passive students into active ones, to involve them in responsible decision making and to provide a model for intelligent citizenship. But participatory democracy can be problematical.

Example: Institute participants have almost decided on the agenda for the following morning. An American objects, finds the scheduled workshop to be too theoretical, wants something more practical, something that will also be enjoyable. Irritation, mostly among some Americans, and incomprehension, mostly among some Soviets, mount as an at-times angry, 90-minute debate follows in which a few people argue theory and practice while 40 wait for the issue to be resolved, as it ultimately is, in favor of the scheduled workshop.

Has this episode, as some maintain, modeled democracy and shown our concern for each individual's views? Has it, as others insist, demonstrated

that self-righteousness and self-indulgence can contaminate democracy? Or is the main issue, as one person suggests, how we talk and listen to each other?

For the Soviets a key word in the Gorbachev era is democratization. It is viewed as one of the chief engines of political, social and economic renewal. Soviet schools are creating student-teacher-parent councils to promote initiative, independence and democratic decision making. But efforts to democratize have only begun and may be overridden by authoritarianism.

Example: Volunteers are requested for a U.S.-Soviet committee. Five Americans immediately raise their hands. No Soviets do. Five Soviets are volunteered—you, you, you, you, you—and submissively appear for the meeting, where Americans make an issue of how they have been selected. The Soviets return to the larger group and five genuine volunteers take their places.

Later, when an American brings up the episode, it is discussed openly. A Soviet leader says, "We have just begun to understand democracy. We need to learn from this experience." Another Soviet counters, "I don't agree. I knew about democracy before I came here. I need the opportunity to practice it." A third argues, "The issue isn't just democracy. It's more complicated. We're suffering from a low level of social consciousness." The discussion loses its focus. The lunch hour arrives.

What have the Soviets left unresolved? What is a productive role for Americans in such a discussion? What opportunities may Soviets and Americans have missed after both of these episodes to clarify our understandings of democracy?

At the institutes, issues of participation and democracy, or authoritarianism and social consciousness, have been intertwined with issues of differing approaches to teaching and learning and of language.

Soviets tend, perhaps especially these days when concrete results are expected from every enterprise, to be product-oriented, to want some tangible conclusion to one's work. ESR teachers tend to be process-oriented, to view the *how* as intimately related to the *what*. Soviets usually prefer the lecture, ESR the workshop. Soviets want excellent answers, ESR first-rate questions.

How do we satisfy these competing desires and approaches? Soviets may leave a session disappointed that it has produced no specific result. Americans that the process has been unsatisfactory or not adequately processed.

Because in our collaborative efforts the working language is English, the Soviets are at a disadvantage even though most of them have been very good speakers of English, even though the Americans have reminded themselves constantly to speak slowly, simply and clearly and even though, when it seemed especially necessary, we have paused for a Russian translation.

But the language barrier is more than linguistic. It is compounded of culture and history as well. As Richard Lourie writes about the difficulties of translation:

> *Since the Russian and American experiences of statehood are so different, the difference between being a servitor and a citizen, we cannot come close to sensing the weight, range, and might of their word* gosudarstvo. *And since*

the state in Russia is almost coeval with the world itself, those who have the power of the state behind them, the vlasti, *are really of a different order of magnitude than mere "authorities," which always in America has a vaguely municipal ring to it. . .*

In English we are always "getting"—getting married, getting promoted—but the Russian verb for getting, dostat, *reflects a society of scarcity and implies chancy expeditions or fabulous strokes of luck. Russian has a single word for "happiness" and "luck," suggesting that happiness is more a matter of good fortune than an inalienable right.**

Nor surprisingly, then, the ESR process approach, a product of American experience and conducted in English, may leave Soviets floundering. "You don't understand what the language barrier means," says one to Americans during a group meeting. "Many don't understand what this group is all about." A second comments, "This group work is a game of communication which you understand, but we don't." Later a Soviet observes, "We are accustomed to being assigned a specific task and doing it. The Americans like to decide for themselves what to do and how to do it."

Given our often unexamined assumptions, Americans and Soviets may find it easy to err. A Soviet gently chastises, "Sometimes Americans tend to say, 'We'll teach you. . . .' The workshop leader, for example, just said that 'free writing is used in the U.S. but is new to Soviet teachers.' Some of us may have been doing this in the USSR for years."

An article prepared by ESR for a Soviet educational publication quotes Allen Boesak, identifying him as a "brave South African minister." The Soviets, assuming that Boesak is a minister of the South African government and without checking with ESR, delete his remarks.

At the same time, the institutes have provided many opportunities for significant learning. Americans have gained insights into differing Soviet views on such issues as human rights, the Afghanistan conflict and school reform. They have experienced Soviet approaches to critical thinking; one, for example, designed to teach students to examine media sources of information critically through a study of ethnic conflict in Uzbekistan. They have learned in detail about the progress of school reform in Novosibirsk, where an elected, innovative principal is leading students, teachers and parents in an effort to democratize their school and facing many of the same problems he would were he a principal in Denver.

In an evaluation of the second institute Soviets reported that they have profited most from opportunities to learn techniques of brainstorming, cooperative games and cooperative learning, role playing the union of democratic practice and critical thinking, conflict resolution and methodological belief. Such ESR processes, despite the language difficulty, have clearly affected not only the thinking of Soviet teachers but also their classroom practice.

**New York Times* Book Section, 6/18/89.

ESR and Soviet educators are committed to continuing the collaboration. Our future agenda includes a third institute in the summer of 1990 in the United States and a joint research project, both on teaching for social responsibility. As a Soviet veteran and severe critic of the Afghanistan war said at the second institute, "The goal of teachers should be to teach students responsibility for what happens in their society."

"Now that the cold war is over," Lourie writes, "Russians and Americans no longer have the luxury of viewing each other as mythic enemies. Now we must see who the other is, where we overlap as human beings and where we don't, where they see mountains and we see plains. Stripped of myth, we are still strangers."

This is the real challenge for Tanya and me and for all of us Soviets and Americans who are learning and working together.

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